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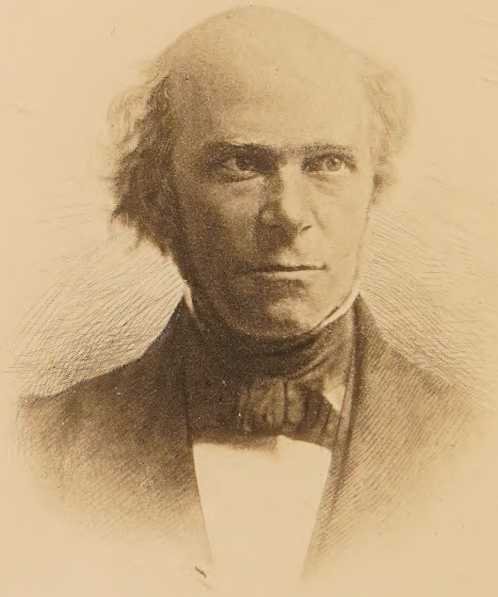

Æt. 42.

Theodore Parker.

# THEODORE PARKER

## PREACHER AND REFORMER

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By JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

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BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1900

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Dedicated

With respect and sympathy to that
steadily increasing company
who believe with

THEODORE PARKER

that Religion is the most natural and significant
expression of our human life, and to the
memory of those who now rest
from their labors in further-
ance of this inspiring
truth

# PREFACE

THERE have been of late various signs of fresh interest in Theodore Parker, and there is this further justification for another life of him after those of Weiss and Frothingham, that the former is out of print and its plates have been destroyed, while the latter, though not so large and expensive as its predecessor, is larger and more expensive than our busier and less-moneyed people can afford to buy and read. Happy are those who have these books in their possession and have read them carefully! Should any of them propose reading the book which I have written, they must not expect to find in it so much as in their greater bulk. But I have had in mind others who are less fortunate than these. I have hoped to make Parker a reality for a generation of readers born since he died, to many of whom he is little known, or mis-known, which is worse. To compress the story of his life into four hundred pages, and those little ones, has been no easy matter. It would have been much easier and pleasanter to make a larger work than Weiss's two octavos, drawing freely upon the

wealth of Parker's journals and correspondence and other writings for the illustration of my theme. And, if not easier and pleasanter, it would have been easy and pleasant to write a biography of Parker within the limits of the present volume that would have been almost entirely autobiographical, — made up from his own writings of all kinds. But, for better or worse, I have conceived my task in a quite different fashion — as an estimate and criticism of the man and the work that he was called to do, and did — while still frequently availing myself of his own expression of his sentiments and thoughts.

For materials I have had Parker's published works, the fourteen volumes of Miss Cobbe's edition and other special volumes and pamphlets, the biographies of Weiss, Frothingham, Réville and Dean, together with some score of manuscript volumes of letters from and to him copied for Mrs. Parker (and to some extent by her) after her husband's death. I have also had Parker's journal and many of his hitherto unpublished letters in his own painfully difficult handwriting, those furnished me by Mrs. R. E. Apthorp and Colonel T. W. Higginson particularly important. Scrap-books and other Parkeriana in the Boston Public Library and in Mr. Sanborn's hands have

added to the embarrassment of riches. I have also been much served by many books that touch on Parker in an incidental manner. If those well acquainted with the Weiss volumes conceive that I have drawn my illustrative matter too freely from their pages, my answer is that I have pounced upon the best wherever I have found it, in Weiss or elsewhere. Weiss having had the first squeeze of the grapes, and having squeezed them well, has, naturally, much of the best. But everything has helped, many a phrase and sentence being qualified by manuscript sources which I could not quote at length. I must needs express my gratitude to Parker's publisher, stenographer, and friend, Mr. Rufus Leighton, for much valuable help. To Mr. Frank B. Sanborn of Concord, Mass., I am very greatly obliged for advice on many points, as well as for the use of manuscripts and other material. His recollections of Parker are hardly less rich than his treasury of original documents. To Mr. Whitney of the Boston Public Library I am also much indebted, and to his assistants, especially to Philip Savage, whose last help to me was cheerfully accorded on the last working day of his pathetically brief and lovingly remembered life.

J. W. C.

August 24, 1900.

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# BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF

# THEODORE PARKER'S PUBLISHED WRITINGS

AND SOME OTHERS HAVING REFERENCE TO HIM [1]

## BOOKS PUBLISHED IN HIS LIFETIME

1842. A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion.

1843. A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament. From the German of De Wette. Translated and enlarged by Theodore Parker.

1843. Critical and Miscellaneous Writings.

Contents: A Lesson for the Day. German Literature. Life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Truth against the World. Thoughts on Labor. Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity. The Pharisees. On the Education of the Laboring Classes. How to move the World. Primitive Christianity. Strauss's Life of Jesus. Thoughts on Theology.

1852. Speeches, Addresses, and Occasional Sermons.

Contents: Vol. I. The Relation of Jesus to his Age and the Ages. The True Idea of a Christian Church. A Sermon of War. A Speech delivered at the Anti-War Meeting in Faneuil Hall. A Sermon of the Mexican War. A Sermon of the Perishing Classes in Boston. A Sermon of Merchants. A Sermon of the Dangerous Classes in Society. A Sermon of Poverty. A Sermon of the Moral Condition of Boston.

[1] None of these lists is offered as complete, but the list of books and pamphlets published in his lifetime is tolerably so.

Vol. II. A Sermon of the Spiritual Condition of Boston. Some Thoughts on the Most Christian Use of the Sunday. A Sermon of Immortal Life. The Public Education of the People. The Political Destination of America, and the Signs of the Times. A Discourse occasioned by the Death of John Quincy Adams. A Speech at a Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, to celebrate the Abolition of Slavery by the French Republic. A Speech at Faneuil Hall before the New England Anti-Slavery Convention. Some Thoughts on the Free Soil Party and the Election of General Taylor.

Vol. III. A Speech in Faneuil Hall considering the Speech of Mr. Webster. A Speech at the New England Anti-Slavery Convention in Boston, May 29, 1850. A Discourse occasioned by the Death of the late President Taylor. The Function and Place of Conscience in relation to the Laws of Men : a Sermon for the Times. The State of the Nation, considered in a Sermon for Thanksgiving Day. The Chief Sins of the People. The Three Chief Safeguards of Society. The Position and Duties of the American Scholar.

1853. Sermons of Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology.

1853. Ten Sermons of Religion.

1855. Additional Speeches, Addresses, and Occasional Sermons.

Contents : Volume I. Speech at the Ministerial Conference in Boston, May 29, 1851. Boston Kidnapping. Aspect of Freedom in America. Discourse on Daniel Webster. The Nebraska Question. Address on the Condition of America, 1854.

Volume II. Anti-Slavery Addresses. Public Function of Woman. Sermon of Old Age.

1855. The Trial of Theodore Parker for the Misdemeanor

of a Speech in Faneuil Hall against Kidnapping; with the Defence.

1857. The Two Christmas Celebrations.

1859. Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister. With some Account of his Early Life, and Education for the Ministry.

(Published both in cloth and paper.)

PAMPHLET SERMONS AND ADDRESSES PUBLISHED IN HIS LIFETIME

1840. The Previous Question between Mr. Andrews Norton and his Alumni, moved and handled in a Letter to all those Gentlemen, by Levi Blodgett.

1841. Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity, preached at the Ordination of Mr. C. C. Shackford, May 19, 1841.

1842. An Humble Tribute to the Memory of William Ellery Channing, preached October 9, 1842.

1843. A Sermon of Slavery, delivered January 31, 1841; repeated June 4, 1843.

1844. The Relation of Jesus to his Age and the Ages, preached at the Thursday Lecture, December 26, 1844.

1845. The Excellence of Goodness: a Sermon preached in the Church of the Disciples in Boston, January 26, 1845.

1845. A Letter to the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers touching Certain Matters of their Theology.

1846. The Idea of a Christian Church: a Discourse at the Installation of Theodore Parker as Minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Church in Boston, January 4, 1846.

1846. A Sermon of War, preached June 7, 1846.

1846. A Sermon of the Perishing Classes in Boston, preached August 30, 1846.

1846. A Sermon of Immortal Life, preached September 20, 1846.

1847. A Sermon of Merchants, preached November 22, 1846.

1847. A Sermon of the Dangerous Classes in Society, preached January 31, 1847.

1848. Some Thoughts on the Most Christian Use of the Sunday, preached January 30, 1848.

1848. A Letter to the People of the United States touching the Matter of Slavery.

1848. A Discourse occasioned by the Death of John Quincy Adams, March 5.

1848. A Sermon of the Mexican War, preached June 25, 1848.

1849. A Sermon of the Moral Condition of Boston, preached February 11, 1849.

1849. A Sermon of the Spiritual Condition of Boston, preached February 18, 1849.

1850. The Public Education of the People : Oration before Teachers' Institute, Syracuse, N. Y., October 4, 1849.

1850. Review of Webster : a Speech delivered March 25, 1850.

1850. The Function and Place of Conscience, a Sermon for the Times, September 22, 1850.

1851. The State of the Nation. Thanksgiving Sermon, November 28, 1850.

1851. The Three Chief Safeguards of Society, July 6, 1851.

1852. The Boston Kidnapping : Sermon on the First Anniversary of the Rendition of Thomas Sims, April 12, 1852.

1852. A Discourse occasioned by the Death of Daniel Webster, October 31, 1852.

1852. Two Sermons preached before the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society on leaving its old and entering a new place of worship, November 14 and 21, 1852.

1853. A Sermon on the Public Function of Woman, March 27, 1853.

1853. A Friendly Letter to the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association touching their new Unitarian Creed.

1854. A Sermon of Old Age, preached January 29, 1854.
1854. The Nebraska Question : Some Thoughts on the New Assault upon Freedom in America, February 12, 1854.
1854. The New Crime against Humanity, preached June 4, 1854.
1854. The Laws of God and the Statutes of Men, June 18, 1854.
1854. A Sermon of the Dangers which threaten the Rights of Man in America, July 2, 1854.
1854. A Sermon of the Consequences of an Immoral Principle and False Idea of Life, November 26, 1854.
1855. A Discourse of the Functions of a Teacher of Religion in these Times, preached at the Ordination of Moses G. Kimball at Barre, Mass., June 3, 1855.
1855. Moral Dangers incident to Prosperity.
1856. The Great Battle between Slavery and Freedom : Speech before New York Anti-Slavery Society, May 7, 1856.
1856. A New Lesson for the Day, preached May 26, 1856.
1858. Present Aspect of Slavery in America, preached January 29, 1858.
1858. On False and True Theology, preached February 14, 1858.
1858. A False and True Revival of Religion, preached April 4, 1858.
1858. The Revival of Religion which we Need, preached April 11, 1858.
1858. Relation of Slavery to a Republican Form of Government : Speech at New England Anti-Slavery Convention, May 28, 1858.
1858. Effect of Slavery on the American People, preached July 4, 1858.
1859. Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister.
1860. Letter to Francis Jackson on John Brown's Expedition, November 4, 1859, from Rome.

Note. — Many of these titles and some of the articles following are repeated in the contents of his collected works.

LIFETIME ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

Christian Examiner : —

1837–58. Robinson's Greek and English Lexicon, vol. xxii. p. 124 ; Gesenius's Hebrew and English Lexicon, vol. xxii. p. 265 ; Matter's History of Gnosticism, vol. xxiv. p. 112 ; Olshausen's Genuineness of the New Testament, vol. xxiv. p. 406 ; Roy's Hebrew and English Dictionary, vol. xxv. p. 129 ; Ackermann's Christianity in Plato, vol. xxv. p. 367 ; Dr. Henry More, vol. xxvi. p. 1 ; New Works recently published in Germany, vol. xxvi. p. 267 ; More's Works, vol. xxvii. p. 48 ; Cudworth's Intellectual System, vol. xxvii. p. 289 ; German Literary Intelligence, vol. xxviii. p. 135 ; Strauss's Life of Jesus, vol. xxviii. p. 273 ; The Book of Jasher, vol. xxviii. p. 390; The Life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, vol. xxx. p. 1 ; Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. li. p. 447 ; Du Cange's Glossary, vol. li. p. 448 ; Jal's Glossary, vol. li. p. 450 ; Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. lxiv. p. 233 ; The Material Condition of the People of Massachusetts, vol. lxv. p. 19.

The Dial : —

1840. July : The Divine Presence in Nature and in the Soul.
1840. October : A Lesson for the Day.
1841. January : German Literature.
1841. April : Thoughts on Labor.
1841. July : The Pharisees.
1842. January : Primitive Christianity.
1842. April : Thoughts on Theology : Dorner's Christology.
1842. October : Hollis Street Council.
1843. January : Life and Character of Dr. Follen.
1843. October : Hennell on the Origin of Christianity.

NOTE. — The *Dial* also contained some minor articles and poems.

Massachusetts Quarterly Review : —

1847. December: The Mexican War.
1848. March : Newman's Hebrew Monarchy.

1848. June : John Quincy Adams.
1848. September : William Ellery Channing; Editor's Note to Readers.
1848. December : Political Destination of America : The Free Soil Movement.
1849. March : Mr. Prescott as a Historian.
1849. June : Macaulay's History of England.
1849. September: Prescott's Conquest of Mexico.
1849. December : Mr. Polk's Administration.
1850. March : Ralph Waldo Emerson.
1850. June : Hildreth's History of the United States.
1850. September : Thoughts on the Different Opinions of the New Testament relative to the Personality of Jesus.

Note. — If Parker wrote anything for *The Harbinger*, *The Present*, *The Spirit of the Age*, I have not succeeded in discovering the traces of his pen. Those in the *Liberator*, New York *Tribune*, and *Anti-Slavery Standard* generally are covered by the list of pamphlet sermons and addresses. In *The Chronotype* there are various editorials and comments on his sermons and speeches with some complete or partial reports of these ; few, if any, direct contributions.

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1861. A Bumblebee's Thoughts on the Plan and Purpose of Creation. Album Combe-Varin, Zurich, 1861. Reprinted in vol. xii. of Miss Cobbe's Edition.
1862. Theodore Parker's Prayers : Edited by Rufus Leighton and Matilda Goddard.

Note. — A later edition (1882) contained a biographical sketch by Frank B. Sanborn, and an Introduction by Louisa M. Alcott.

1863–70. Theodore Parker's Works. Fourteen Volumes. Edited with an Introduction by Frances Power Cobbe. Vol. i. A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion. Vol. ii. Ten Sermons and Prayers. Vol. iii. Discourses of Theology. Vol. iv. Discourses of Politics. Vol. v. Discourses of Slavery. Vol. vi. Discourses of Slavery. Vol. vii. Discourses of Social Science. Vol. viii. Miscellaneous Discourses. Vol.

ix. Critical and Miscellaneous. Vol. x. Critical and Miscellaneous. Vol. xi. Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology. Vol. xii. Miscellaneous. Vol. xiii. Historic Americans. Vol. xiv. Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Men.

1870. Historic Americans, with Introduction by O. B. Frothingham. (An American book, preceding the same matter in Miss Cobbe's edition.)

1876. Transcendentalism : a Lecture. (Pamphlet, 59 pp.) Preliminary Note by W. C. Gannett.

1877. A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion, with Introduction by O. B. Frothingham, Biographical Sketch by Hannah E. Stevenson, and Analytical Table of Contents by W. C. Gannett.

1885. Passages from Theodore Parker's Writings, selected by Albert Walkley, 1885.

1885. Views of Religion, by Theodore Parker. With an Introduction by James Freeman Clarke. Published by the American Unitarian Asssociation.

1892. West Roxbury Sermons, by Theodore Parker, 1837–1848. From unpublished manuscripts, with Introduction by Samuel J. Barrows, and Biographical Sketch by Frank B. Sanborn.

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1865. Life and Writings of Theodore Parker. By Albert Réville. Translated from the French of the same year.

1874. Theodore Parker : a Biography. By Octavius Brooks Frothingham.

1877. Life of Theodore Parker. By Peter Dean. (An English book.)

1883. Story of Theodore Parker. By Frances E. Cooke. With an Introduction by Grace A. Oliver. (For Young People.)

SKETCHES, CRITICISMS, ETC.

NOTE. — This particular list is necessarily very imperfect.

1841. The South Boston Ordination, with much related matter, in Vol. 5441.65, Boston Public Library.
1847. Westminster Review. James Martineau.
1859. Theodore Parker and his Theology : a Discourse by James Freeman Clarke, preached in Music Hall, September 25.
1860. A Look at the Life of Theodore Parker : a Sermon by James Freeman Clarke.
1860. Theodore Parker : a Discourse by A. D. Mayo.
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1860. Theodore Parker : a Discourse by George H. Hepworth.
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1860. National Review, Vol. xxi.
1861. Bibliotheca Sacra, January. By Daniel Parker Noyes. (Able and severe.)
1864. Christian Examiner (reviewing Weiss), January. J. H. Allen.
1864. Christian Examiner (reviewing Weiss), July. D. A. Wasson.
1866. Contemporary Review. Professor Cheetham.
1867. Fortnightly Review, Vol. viii. M. D. Conway.
1880. Unitarian Review, June : A Discourse before the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society on the Twentieth Anniversary of Theodore Parker's Death, by John W. Chadwick.
1890. Unity, June 5. Theodore Parker, the Man and the Reformer : William J. Potter. Theodore Parker, the Thinker : John W. Chadwick. Theodore Parker as Pastor : Ednah Dean Cheney.
1890. Theodore Parker : a Lecture by Samuel Johnson.
1892. Christian Register, January 7. Account of the Unveiling of Parker Monument in Florence.

INCIDENTAL SKETCHES AND COMMENTS

1875. Ezra Stiles Gannett : a Memoir. By his son, William C. Gannett. Chapters iii., vii.

1878. Memorial and Biographical Sketches. By James Freeman Clarke. Chapter iv.

1882. Our Liberal Movement in Theology, and "Sequel," 1897. Joseph Henry Allen.

1890. Unitarianism : its Origin and History. (Particularly Lectures v., ix., and x., the last being "Theodore Parker," by Samuel B. Stewart.)

1894. Unitarian Movement since the Reformation, by J. H. Allen.

1894. Old and New Unitarian Belief, by John W. Chadwick.

1899. American Lands and Letters, by D. G. Mitchell.

See also Caroline H. Dall's Transcendentalism, 1897; Frothingham's Transcendentalism in New England, 1876 ; Recollections and Impressions, 1891 ; Sanborn's Life of John Brown, 1885 ; Higginson's Cheerful Yesterdays, 1898 ; G. W. Cooke's Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1881, and John S. Dwight, 1899 ; Julia Ward Howe's Reminiscences, 1899 ; Lindsay Swift's Brook Farm, 1900 ; Pierce's Life of Charles Sumner, Vol. iii., 1893 ; William Lloyd Garrison : the Story of his Life told by his Children, 1885–89 ; Coleridge : Frederic H. Hedge, Christian Examiner, March, 1833 ; "Philosophic Thought in Boston," in Memorial History of Boston ; and many articles and references in the Christian Register, The Radical, Unity, Christian Inquirer, and Liberal Christian.

Note. — Reports (containing six sermons) of Meetings of Progressive Friends, Longwood, Pa., for 1855 and 1858, should be added to list of Lifetime Publications.

# THEODORE PARKER

## CHAPTER I

### THE GROWING BOY

THE town of Lexington, Massachusetts, where Theodore Parker was born, August 24, 1810, was an important factor in his development. So much would have been true, no doubt, if Lexington were one of those unhappy towns that have no history, reversing so the proverb which declares the nations without a history to be the happiest. Lexington might have had none, and yet, because it had woods and fields and streams, flowers too, and the four seasons with their changing looks, and Father Taylor's "folks — better than angels," it would have done great things for the young Theodore and the man he came to be. But in few other places could the predestination to a patriotic temper have been so strong as it was in Lexington, the town which shares with Concord the fadeless honor of that April day which saw the war for our American independence well begun. Little need was there for John Parker, Theodore's grandfather, to take a leading part in the doings of that fateful day to

make the grandson's calling and election sure. But this he did, as if the destiny of his descendant could not be too much confirmed.

So many Parkers appeared in the New England settlements at an early day that the "three brothers who came over together" might easily be made a dozen if one were sufficiently uncritical. Theodore's earliest American ancestor was Thomas Parker, who came over in 1635, in a vessel fitted out by Sir Richard Saltonstall, and settled in Lynn. Edward Parker, who may have been an uncle of this Thomas, married Sir Richard Saltonstall's granddaughter in 1602. His coat of arms had for its motto *Non fluctu nec flatu moveter*, which motto Theodore Parker sometimes used upon a seal, convinced of its intrinsic excellence if not of its validity as an ancestral circumstance. The original Thomas moved to Reading in 1640 and was one of the seven founders and a deacon of the first church in that town. He had six sons and four daughters. His son Jonathan had fourteen children, after having written certain "dying words" in King Philip's War, very touching in their filial piety and religious trust. His brother Hananiah was the father of John Parker, who was the root from which the Lexington Parkers mainly sprang, and who removed from Reading to Lexington, then Cambridge Farms, in 1712 or thereabout. His son Hananiah had died in 1711 at Port Royal, where he was serving in a Massachusetts regiment of the besieging army. One of his letters is remarkable for

the daring ingenuity of its spelling and for what of resemblance it suggests to the miserable condition of affairs recently before Santiago, — or does war furnish much the same catalogue of horrors every time?

John had nine other children, some of whom, married or unmarried, went with him to Lexington. His son Nathaniel had fourteen children, Bethiah, the mother of whom, lived to be ninety years old. These facts and others already noted suggest a vigorous and prolific stock and prepare us for the size of that family of which Theodore Parker was the crowning joy. John's son Josiah was one of the first citizens of Lexington, holding at one time or another every local office in the people's gift. His nephew, Jonas Parker, a son of Andrew, played a heroic part on the 19th of April, 1775. Living next door to Rev. Jonas Clarke, the patriot minister, "he imbibed," says Mr. Hudson, the historian of Lexington, "a double portion of his spirit." Wounded by the second fire of the British, he sank upon his knees and fired his own piece, and then, making no effort to flee, received a bayonet thrust, through which his soul escaped.

John Parker, Theodore's grandfather, was the son of Josiah the good citizen, and was born July 13, 1729, and died September 17, 1775, only five months after his most memorable day of days. The Lexington Parkers gave to history and fame no other name of such distinction until Theodore

arrived. Lady Adelaide Lindsay, remarkable for her plainness, when some one spoke of her improved appearance, said, "Yes, I believe the bloom of my ugliness is wearing off a little." The bloom of Theodore Parker's theological ugliness has, by this time, very much worn off for Lexington people; but his grandfather's doings on the Green are doubtless prized more highly than the great preacher's life-long work. And Theodore would himself have had it so. The town has marked Captain Parker's grave with a plain and massive granite monument, and is about (1899) to place his statue on the Green, surmounting a fountain. The conception will be ideal, no counterfeit presentment of his face being obtainable. Of nothing pertaining to himself in any way was Theodore so proud as of Captain John Parker's deeds and words at the battle of Lexington. Captain Parker commanded the company of Lexington minute men. At two o'clock on the morning of the 19th he called the roll of his company and ordered them to load their pieces with powder and ball. Getting no further news of the British advance, he dismissed his men, with the understanding that they should reassemble when the proper signal was given, — the drum-beat and the firing of a gun. It was given at half-past four, and the company was not well formed before the British column arrived. When some of his men wavered Captain Parker ordered them to stand their ground and threatened to shoot the first man who should leave his post.

As the British drew nearer he said, "Don't fire unless fired upon; but if they mean to have a war, *let it begin here!*" And so it did. The minute-men did not return the first fire because only blank cartridges were used, but at the second, several of their number fell and they replied. Captain Parker, seeing the futility of opposing fifty men to eight hundred, ordered his company to disperse. Seven or eight of them were killed and more were wounded. Later in the day they mustered again and contributed their part to the general demoralization and partial destruction of the British soldiery and to their "expedition" back again to Boston.[1]

Relics were not in Parker's line, but he had two which were to him of inestimable value. They are displayed in the Senate Chamber of the Boston State House: "The fire-arm used by Captain John Parker in the battle of Lexington, April 19th, 1775," and "The First Fire-Arm captured in the War for Independence." These fire-arms were the gift of Theodore Parker to the State. The King's-arm was taken by Captain Parker from a grenadier of the 43d regiment. So long as the two muskets hung in Parker's study they were to him a daily inspiration, and there were times when it seemed highly probable that he might use one or the other of them to begin another war. The

[1] Franklin to Dr. Priestley: "You will have heard before this reaches you of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night and of their *expedition* back again." "Twenty miles in three hours!" he wrote to Burke; "scarce to be paralleled in history."

butt end of either would have served if, when a fugitive slave was hidden in the house, the slave-catchers had appeared.

Theodore's father, another John, was born February 14, 1761, and, consequently, he was but fourteen years old on that warm April day when his father was so busily engaged from two o'clock in the morning until twelve at night. Did he from some safe or daring vantage watch the progress of the fight, and when in June his father was too sick to go to Bunker Hill did he chafe and fret because his callowness denied to him the privilege of sharing in the great event? We do not know, but it is certain that the father died in September, when it is likely that the son's boyhood ended suddenly, he being the third of ten children and the two older being girls. But the mother married again in 1778, unluckily, being finally obliged to bring her thriftless husband home and support him on her widow's thirds. John Parker married Hannah Stearns in 1784 and of their eleven children Theodore was the last. So confidently was the tenth the last that the family sampler had been made upon that plan, when, after a five years' interval, Theodore's arrival demanded some ingenious changes in that piece of work. The name so ominously given him was one which had never until now bloomed on the family tree. He was baptized according to the family custom, for which the mother was probably responsible, but not until he was four years old, when his "Oh, don't!" in

which his biographers have found prophetic intimation of his mature distaste for all conventional forms, was clearly the small boy's dislike of water on his face.

Two months before his death he began to write an autobiography, but, as he anticipated, he did not get far in it. It begins with his material surroundings. For certain botanical niceties we are indebted to a friendly hand, but these do not affect the general impression of the boy's Shakespearean assimilation of the early world on which he looked abroad. "The situation was pleasant; a considerable valley a mile or more in length and half a mile wide, with a fresh meadow at the bottom called in deeds of the time 'the great meadow.'" A brook stole through the valley and percolated through the soft, spongy meadow, finding its way at length into Charles River. The house was near the upper end of this valley, some three miles from the village centre. It stood facing the south, unlike its successor, which stands facing eastward. Theodore was the last child born in the old house, the site of which is marked as his birthplace by a massive cube of Concord granite, set there by his Boston friends. The site was pleasant, but it was not a healthy one, the exhalations of the meadow developing a consumptive habit in the family blood, to which Theodore's mother brought some positive aggravation.

In the rear of the house was a monstrous elm which endangered the building, and was removed as a nui-

sance; that was a full-grown tree in the days of my grandfather's grandfather; other huge oaks and elms once stood close by, but they had all perished before my birth, and only a white ash with a great round top stood at the northwest corner of the house. It was planted by my grandfather, and was the largest tree of the kind I remember to have seen in New England.

On the hard land saxifrage and columbines grew on the sunny side of all the great rocks, blue violets and white were to be had everywhere, and anemones nodded their handsome heads on the south side of every wall where nature had her way.

A score or two of flowers are named that grew in the dooryard garden and in the adjoining fields, many getting from some loving epithet an added grace. How well did he consider the lilies, how they grew, sometimes with forty-nine buds and blossoms on a single stalk. Through all this range of observation the child was father of the man, and yet it was always with the fragrance of remembered joy that flowers and fruits and fields were sweetest in his sermons and his prayers. His boyhood was his manhood's coolest spring of fancy and poetical expression. It is difficult to imagine how any natural surroundings could have yielded him more abundantly the right material for "emotion recollected in tranquillity."

From the middle of May, when the introduced trees, the plum, peach, cherry, apple, and pear began to bloom, till the middle or end of October, the eye need not seek a landscape of humble, quiet New England beauty more attractive than this, and all winter long

the white pines, which seemed so cool and attractive in July and August, had a warm, motherly look, and told of life still sleeping in them, around them, everywhere.

Upon his "Human Surroundings" the boy looked with an equally observant eye, and the man reverted to them with a livelier appreciation of their essential worth. His mother was the daughter of a neighboring farmer, Benjamin Stearns, and Hannah Seger. When his father married her, he wore blue yarn stockings, and brought her home, set high on his farm-horse, to a house furnished with hard simplicity, the common plates of wood, the larger dishes of pewter and coarse earthenware. Of linen there was a better show, because her father raised the flax and her brother prepared it for the loom, and she herself spun it and made it into serviceable tablecloths and towels, white as the driven snow.

The family into which Theodore was born was large enough to rather overfill the house, though in 1810 the oldest of ten children was already twenty-five, and several of them had gone away from home to make their start in life. It was a reading family, the father setting an example to the rest, and reading mainly solid books of history and political economy and mental philosophy. Paley, anticipating Theodore, he did not like, saying that he "left us no conscience." Poetry he did not like, but read much of the best to see what there was in it. He read much of the cur-

rent theology, disapproving stoutly of its more brutal elements. His liberal views outran those preached at the Centre — in Theodore's childhood solely Unitarian — excluding not only the trinity, atonement, and eternal hell, but the more striking miracles of either Testament. Here were germs which, lodged in Theodore's young mind, grew there apace. Clean-spoken, helpful, kindly, and straightforward, and credited with "all the manners of the neighborhood," one of the best New England virtues was apparently denied the father — thrift. He was, perhaps, a worse farmer for being a pretty good mechanic, and leaving the boys to work the farm while he puttered in the carpenter's shop; such an one as that of Nazareth, rude cabinet-making alternating there with the making and mending of farmers' implements. So Theodore had, like the young Jesus, the happy privilege of playing among sweet-smelling chips and shavings, and he made such advance in the business that there is (or was, not long ago) a shapely strong-built cradle testifying to his early skill. As for the workshop, there was not another in New England that had such music in its frame, as of a Stradivarius that has been played on by some master's hand. It was nothing less than the belfry of the village meeting-house, the same which, standing on the Green, like some famous campanile, had quivered with the peal of that most sacred bell which did its part in summoning the farmer-folk to unaccustomed work on the 19th

of April, 1775. If the boy's ears were dull to catch the echoes lingering among the rafters where the bell had hung, the man's were well attuned to them in after years.

So far as Theodore Parker's intellectual and moral gifts were a direct inheritance from his parents, the intellectual came more from his father than from his mother. "Her reading was confined mainly to the Bible, the hymn-book, and stories of New England captives among the Indians," some of which were preserved in manuscript and never printed. She was industrious and neat, putting off each afternoon her blue check working-dress for a more comely gown. She was a member of "the church," that inner circle which Jonathan Edwards would have had made up of conscious saints, but which numbered among its "members" many tenderly distrustful souls. Hannah Parker was one of these.

She was (wrote Theodore) eminently a religious woman. I have known few in whom the religious instincts were so active and profound, and who seemed to me to enjoy so completely the life of God in the soul of man. . . . She saw Him in the rainbow, and in the drops of rain which helped to compose it as they fell into the muddy ground, to come up grass and trees, and corn and flowers. She took a deep and still delight in silent prayer. . . . The more spiritual part of the Bible formed her favorite reading; the dark theology of the times seems not to have stained her soul at all. She took great pains with the moral culture of her children, at least with mine.

One example of her nice and delicate care in this regard brings to an end the too-brief autobiographical fragment. It has been paraphrased, or quoted, many times, but it is infinitely precious, and no account of Parker's childhood that omitted it would have even approximate completeness. Moreover, the story cannot be fitly told except in his own words: —

When a little boy in petticoats in my fourth year, one fine day in spring, my father led me by the hand to a distant part of the farm, but soon sent me home alone. On the way I had to pass a little "pond-hole" then spreading its waters wide; a rhodora in full bloom — a rare flower in my neighborhood, and which grew only in that locality — attracted my attention and drew me to the spot. I saw a little spotted tortoise sunning himself in the shallow water at the root of the flaming shrub. I lifted the stick I had in my hand to strike the harmless reptile; for, though I had never killed any creature, yet I had seen other boys out of sport destroy birds, squirrels, and the like, and I felt a disposition to follow their example. But all at once something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, "It is wrong!" I held my uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion — the consciousness of an involuntary but inward check upon my actions — till the tortoise and the rhodora both vanished from my sight. I hastened home and told the tale to my mother, and asked what was it that told me it was wrong? She wiped a tear from her eye with her apron, and taking me in her arms, said, "Some men call it conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and

clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out little by little, and leave you all in the dark and without a guide. Your life depends on heeding this little voice." She went her way, careful and troubled about many things, but doubtless pondered them in her motherly heart; while I went off to wonder and think it over in my poor childish way. But I am sure no event in my life has made so deep and lasting an impression on me.

With such parentage and fostering, and with such a wholesome, sweet environment, the growing boy was very happy, and, until the great hunger for books and a liberal education came upon him, unconscious of any real lack. From the first he lived very near to Nature's heart. Sometimes he was permitted to run barefoot, in his little night-shirt, on the new-fallen snow. To see its great drifts melt away in spring was always a delight. When the last drift, on the north side of some wall or ledge, had disappeared and the ground was dry and beginning to be sweetly troubled with the roots of wind-flowers and violets, he had free range and made good use of it: —

I used to sit or lie on the ground in a dry and sheltered spot, and watch the great yellow clouds of April that rolled their huge masses over my head, filling my eye with their strange, fantastic, ever-changing forms and my mind with wonder at what they were, and how they came there.

There was a rocky ledge behind the house, — an invaluable appurtenance, as many boys must

know, — where, when he fell in love with study, he used to draw apart for close-companioned, inarticulate joy. From this coign of vantage he could see two lofty pines with which he established personal relations, devoting one of them to himself and another to a loved sister. For his sake a kindly farmer saved them from the axe and for some years after his death they kept his memory green. There are pleasant rumors of his going to Boston to sell the peaches grown in the home orchard, and wearing on his cheeks a rosier blush than theirs. Near by the pine-tree totems stood the school-house where he got the rudiments of an education which he would not have thought complete if he had lived till now. Like Michael Angelo he would have "carried his satchel still," until the long day's end. Disliking then, as later, beaten tracks, he went to school across-lots through the meadow and the brook, setting the stepping stones himself. For two years he attended the school summer and winter, but after 1818 in winter only. He was a good boy, but inclined to mischief, as when, having a pop-gun of phenomenal proportions, he fired a shot heard round the schoolroom, which, for the pop-gun, was the crack of doom. His schoolmates, as he grew older, liked him, but were shy of him because his sense of the ridiculous was already keen, and his powers of mimicry foreboded rare delights for those who had the freedom of his study in his best estate. Mr. Weiss writes of him as being rough in play

and tumbling his playmates in a shaggy fashion, while, at the same time, he hated to see any "put upon" by the bullying sort.

It was significant that his first "composition" was "The Starry Heavens," so impressive to his manhood were their greater and their lesser lights. In 1820 William H. White, afterward a Unitarian minister, taught the district school. He started Theodore in Latin and Greek, and the grown man was always grateful for this service, and often wrote to his old teacher and interested himself warmly in his daughter's education. When Mr. White went away, Theodore, sick abed, put his head under the bedclothes and cried, he was so sorry at the change. One of his teachers, the first according to a letter from Parker to him, presenting him with a copy of his De Wette's "Introduction to the Old Testament," was Dr. George R. Noyes, afterward a sound Hebrew scholar and, as professor in the Harvard Divinity School, beloved by many an awkward squad of students in that secluded nook. In 1855 Parker sent him a copy of his "Defence," which is now in my possession, and with it the letter that presented it: "When I used to go to school to you in the little dirty old building at Lexington, I did n't dream of sending you a Defence against an Indictment of the Grand Jury for 'Misdemeanor.' But so it turns out."

The boy's early schooling consisted of two double terms, summer and winter, and besides these nine

winter terms of eleven weeks, and one term at the Lexington Academy in 1826. For the rest, until he entered the Divinity School, he was self-taught. There was a "Social Library" in Lexington containing a few hundred volumes, some of them not so bad. John Parker was a subscriber on his own account and Theodore caught on behind. He read translations of Homer and Plutarch before he was eight; Rollin's Ancient History about the same time. This now appears hardly less ancient than the events recorded, but any book is a good book that encourages in a boy the reading habit. The facts will come in due time; the muddy stream will soon run itself clear. Other histories soon followed and all the poetry that he could lay his hands on, his first writing of verses dating from this time. A single reading of a poem from 500 to 1000 lines in length was sufficient to impress it on his memory. In the meeting-house he used to commit the hymns to memory while the minister was reading them. At ten he made a catalogue of all the vegetables, plants, trees, and shrubs that grew upon the farm, inventing names where he could not find the right one. Fortunately the small family stock of books included a folio copy of Evelyn's celebrated "Sylva." Metaphysics began to interest him before he was twelve, and astronomy. He was twelve years old when he saw the crescent form of Venus with his naked eye. He had never heard of such a thing, but got a larger astronomy from the schoolmaster and confirmed the fact.

The first book bought with his own money was a Latin dictionary. This was in 1822. He got the money by picking huckleberries, which he carried to Boston and sold. It was the first of 13,000 volumes, and always had an honored place among them in his library, as it now has in the Boston Public Library, to which he bequeathed his books.

The boy's religious education proceeded at an equal pace with the intellectual. As the last child of the family his mother had more time for him than she had for the others in their quick succession. The neighbors said that she was "spilin' that boy." In fact she was nourishing his heart with wholesome piety and endearing herself to him so much that every time in later years when he prayed to God as "Our Father and our Mother," as he often did, he added another flower to the wreath that twined her memory. His worst fault as a boy was a hasty temper which was not easily controlled. Those unclean spirits which infest the minds of many boys found no harborage in his. It being so in thought, it was inevitably so in word and act. The growing youth did not make good the promise of his early looks. He became awkward and bashful, too sensitive to praise or blame for his own peace of mind, — a lifelong trait. It should have made him more considerate of others than he sometimes was. His unfailing reverence for the character of Jesus began when he was a very little boy. There was the shaping of his mother's gentle hand. And very early, too,

began his protest against "the popular theology," as he generally designated the traditional theology of the New England churches. He tried hard to think himself as wicked as a stray Westminster Catechism seemed to make him out, but it was uphill work, and he soon gave it up. He knew that he was a good boy, trying to be a better one, and there was no place in his experience, from his childhood up, for any genuine "conviction of sin" as the underlying groundwork of his life, no place for a "conversion" of the kind demanded by the sterner sects. All was healthy growth and normal evolution: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. But if he could not appropriate the conventional methods of salvation, it was not because he gave to them no trial. He wrote in his journal, 1839: —

> I can hardly think without a shudder of the terrible effect the doctrine of eternal damnation had on me. How many, many hours have I wept with terror as I lay on my bed, till, between praying and weeping, sleep gave me repose. But before I was nine years old this fear went away, and I saw clearer light in the goodness of God. But for years, say from seven till ten, I said my prayers with much devotion, I think, and then continued to repeat, "Lord, forgive my sins," till sleep came on me.

Some years later — we are not told exactly when — he had his first doubts about that future life of which in his maturity he had no shadow of misgiving. He heard the minister preach about it

and insist that except for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, there was no argument for it of any value.

Boy as I was, I saw the folly of that to prove a universal proposition, but, boy as I was, I could not reason the matter out and, in default of reasoning, prove my immortality; so I felt constrained to doubt, almost to deny it. Some weeks passed over, weeks of torment; at last spontaneous nature came to my help, and I settled the question, not intellectually and by philosophy, but sentimentally in the child's way, not the man's. It was not till years afterward that I found a philosophy that satisfied the intellectual demands and helped me to prove it to myself.

When a mature man he read Miller's "Life of Jonathan Edwards" and wrote of it in his journal: —

A most remarkable child, youth and man, mild, gentle, and most lovely. How such a person must have revolted, naturally, from the stern, hard doctrines of Calvinism! How his heart must have bled before it could admit the dreadful doctrines, — total depravity and eternal damnation and the like. Oh! if they wrung his soul as they have wrung mine, it must have bled.

Is the reference here to his early experience or to the sympathetic horrors of his later life? For the former it would seem too strong. What is certain is that his later boyhood and his youth were full of happiness, a good conscience and a warm religious sentiment contributing their parts

to make them sweet and glad; so much so that, generally, when he looked back, he had no memory for anything that was not bright and good. Preaching to the Progressive Friends at Longwood, Pa., in 1858, his subject "The Soul's Normal Delight in the Infinite God," he said: —

I have swum in clear, sweet waters all my days; and if sometimes they were a little cold and the stream ran adverse and something rough, it was never too strong to be breasted and swum through. From the days of earliest boyhood, when I went stumbling through the grass "as merry as a May bee" up to the gray bearded man of this time, there is none that has not left me honey in the hive of memory that I now feed on for present delight. When I recall the years of boyhood, youth, early manhood, I am filled with a sense of sweetness and wonder that such little things can make a mortal so exceedingly rich.

In another part of the same passage he traces the development of the religious sentiment in terms that are a clear reflection of his own experience: —

There is a Jacob's ladder for our young pilgrim, whereon he goes up from his earthly mother who manages the little room he sleeps in, to his dear Heavenly Mother, who never slumbers nor sleeps, who is never careful nor troubled about anything, but yet cares continually for the great housekeeping of all the world, giving likewise to her beloved even in their sleep. In the child it is only the faint twilight, the beginning of religion which you take notice of, like the voice of the bluebird and the phœbe, coming early in March, but

only as a prelude to that whole summer of joyous song which, when the air is delicate, will ere long gladden and beautify the procreant nest.

Such were the early influences that went to shape the growing boy and make him as naturally the father of the man he came to be as his own simple and kindly parents were the progenitors of his body, mind, and heart. His natural environment contributed to his happiness many homely, beautiful, and solemn things, which germinated in his mind's good soil and became in after years fair growths of fancy and imagination, giving a warmth and color to his speech, a reality to his words, which could not come from books; the air of Lexington was full of haunting echoes of the great April day and his grandfather's manly part therein; good books and teachers helped the beginnings of that culture and that intellectual acquirement which were to take on such liberal proportions as his life more fully orbed itself from year to year; and, best of all, his father's intellectual engrossment and sincerity and his mother's deep religiousness gave clear direction to the movement of his mind, his conscience, and his spiritual life.

## CHAPTER II

### STUDENT AND TEACHER

History may not repeat itself, but personal experience does so often that one suspects a law of similar causes producing similar effects. When I read of Theodore Parker's going off one day, not telling whither, and returning late at night and going to his father's room and finding him abed, but still awake, and saying, "Father, I entered Harvard College to-day," I cannot but recall a like experience of my own youth, and wonder if boys generally seek the cover of the dark for such startling revelations of their hopes and plans. Moreover, my father greeted my announcement of two years' more preparatory study and three at Cambridge in words almost identical with those of John Parker: "Why, Theodore, you know I cannot support you there." Then Theodore explained that he would stay at home and keep up with his class, or do as he had already done when teaching at Waltham and elsewhere — pay a man to do his work upon the farm. He had been to Cambridge that day, and passed his examinations for the freshman class. It was a day he never could forget. He often recurred to it in his journal and

letters, always with tender, grateful thoughts; those in his journal flowering into such prayers as this (August 23, 1850): —

> Father, who hast been my help and my reliance hitherto, — in the dangerous period of passion, and my trial of poverty, — be with me now in the more dangerous period of ambition. Help me to be one with Thee, obedient to Thy will in my heart and faithful to all the monitions of Thy guiding Spirit. If other twenty years pass by me, make me by so much a nobler, greater, better man.

The Harvard scheme was carried out. He took all the studies, and passed all the examinations, but got no degree, because he had not resided in Cambridge, nor paid tuition fees. Afterward, Dr. Francis interceding, he was offered the Bachelor's degree on payment of four years' tuition fees. The price was more than he could pay, but the honorary degree of A. M. was given to him in 1840.

Continuing his farm work in the summer seasons until 1831, he began district school teaching in the winter of 1827–28 in Quincy; the next winter found him at North Lexington, the next at Concord, utterly unconscious of what that town would one day mean for him, and the winter of 1830–31 in Waltham. In these experiments he had the reputation of being over-strict and very exacting with his scholars. Here was the endeavor of a boy to maintain a man's authority, and the modesty which assumed that others had his gifts of memory and application. At North Lexing-

ton he got $25 a month, so that after paying his board and the man working in his place, he still had something left for books, if second hand, no matter. During these years he was one of the Lexington militia; was made lieutenant and clerk of the company, as such calling the familiar surnames to which men answered in the spring of 1775. The Lexington home life ended for him March 23, 1831, when he went to Boston as assistant in a private school. His father did not wish to take the $11 monthly for Theodore's substitute on the farm, but Theodore insisted that he must not be used better than his brothers had been before him, and he had his way. Getting $15 a month and his board, he had thus $4 left each month for luxuries, until, on the 24th of August, he reached the age of twenty-one. Writing Dr. Howe in 1860, he tells what manner of youth he was when he went to Boston, never to return, except for flying visits, to the rude nest in which his powers received their earliest and best nourishment: —

A raw boy, with clothes made by country tailors, coarse shoes, great hands, red lips, and blue eyes, I went to serve in a private school, where for fifteen dollars a month and my board I taught Latin, Greek, subsequently French (!), and mathematics, and all sorts of philosophy. . . . I taught in the school six hours a day, and from May to September seven; but I had always from ten to twelve hours a day for my own private studies out of school. . . . Judge if I did not work: it makes my flesh creep to think how I used to work, and

how much I learned that year and the four next. . . . Oh, that I had known the art of life, or found some man to tell me how to *live*, to *study*, to *take exercise*, etc. But I found none, and so here I am.

The self-conscious note in this is unmistakable. It appeared at every stage of his career. He was not one of Carlyle's great men who are unconscious of themselves any more than was Carlyle himself. But, if sometimes exaggerated and morbid, his self-consciousness was generally sweet and wholesome and robust. It never even tended to mean self-satisfaction; it always "spurred the sides of his intent."

Equally plain, from much contemporary evidence, is the fact that he was already overworking miserably, and nourishing those seeds of dejection and ill-health that were latent in his constitution. In his early years he was much less affable and companionable than he was further on. His year in Boston was a very lonely one, and it is clear that he was homesick and heartsick a good deal of the time. Brimstone was a specific in those days, and Parker took it in that kind dealt out by Dr. Lyman Beecher, who had come to Boston to beard the Unitarian lion in its den, going to hear him preach for a year, and attending one of his "protracted meetings." He says: "I greatly respected the talents, the zeal, and the enterprise of that able man, who certainly taught me much; but I came away with no confidence in his theology. The better I understood it, the more self-

contradictory, unnatural, and hateful did it seem." It was, perhaps, well for him to have this first-hand knowledge of a system of which he was to be the critic further on. He was accused of not understanding it. It was because he understood it so well that he could make no terms with it, but struck at it with all his might. But how different that year would have been for him if he had gone to hear Dr. Channing preach, who was then just returned from Santa Cruz! Here was the saddest waste of a great opportunity. Of Garrison and the "Liberator," just entering on their mighty work, he probably knew nothing then, or for some years to come. It was not strange that as late as 1840 the "Liberator" was equally ignorant of him, printing his name "—— Parker of Roxbury" in its account of the Groton Convention of that year.

During the Boston year he read all of Homer and much of Xenophon, Demosthenes, and Æschylus, adding the study of German to that of French, and acquiring, then or later, the ability to write as well as read these languages; doing much at the same time in mathematics and philosophy. He, nevertheless, found time to write a lecture on Poland for the Lexington Lyceum; but with what approval from the local censors of his native township we are not informed. More important to him was this first expression of those wide political sympathies which characterized his maturity. Fortunately, at the year's end he was advised to open a private school in Watertown, a few miles

from Boston, Cambridge an adjoining town. He made the venture, which at first did not seem encouraging. He began with two pupils, one of them taken for nothing. But with the Broads, on the road to Newton Corner, he had a homelike boarding-place, upon the death of Nathaniel Broad, the husband, making himself very useful to the wife, a kind-hearted, motherly woman. The schoolroom was in the second story of an old bakery, and Theodore utilized his knowledge of carpentry in making benches, desks, a wainscot, and other necessary improvements. He soon had a full school; thirty-five in a year's time, and later fifty-four. Some who could not afford to pay anything came for thanks; the well-to-do paid four or five dollars a term, according to the grade. One colored girl was admitted with serene unconsciousness, and then dismissed because some of the white parents objected. That was Theodore's first engagement with the race problem, and it was for him a losing battle. He made large atonement in due time, but never could forgive himself that early cruelty, or ever think of it without self-contempt.

He put much heart and conscience into his teaching, and made it something very real both to himself and to his scholars. If he expected much of them, he could inspire them to realize his expectations. He won their confidence; their love. Later, when he was on the Roxbury school committee, he insisted, or suggested, that the teachers

should not inflict corporal punishment "without some *ostensible* reason." He thought it too much to demand the *real* reason, "because it might be that the boy had n't a pretty sister." That was a hint taken from his own experience. In Watertown, Frank (surname not given) was kept after school to receive punishment, but he looked so much like his sister Harriet, a lovely girl with whom Theodore used to read and take long walks, that he kissed the little reprobate and let him go.

He lived a much more natural and pleasant life in Watertown than he had lived in Boston, seeing something of people and making friends. He had relations in the town who had urged his coming, and were kind to him in simple farmer fashion that kept the traditions of his boyhood fresh and sweet. It was a notable circumstance that he brought a letter from his Lexington pastor to Rev. Convers Francis, a brother of Lydia Maria Child, abounding in her kindly sympathies, but without her moral courage. He was made Dr. Francis in 1837, and in 1842 Parkman Professor in the Harvard Divinity School, where I found him in 1861 and lost him in 1863.

> Dead he lay among his books,
> The peace of God was in his looks;

and John Weiss, who succeeded him in the Watertown pastorate, spoke to us words as cheerful as the April day. The books were many even in 1832, when Parker made his acquaintance, an acquaintance that was to ripen into one of the warm-

est friendships of his life. He was one of the early German scholars, and his library was strong in German books. He could not always remember the titles in my day, but he had an *alter ego* who seldom failed him, when he said to her — his daughter — "Abby, what is the book I am trying to think of?" From this good man Parker got ample sympathy with his studious ways and furtherance in his pursuit of knowledge. His preaching, too, was a real help. It went deeper than any the boy had yet heard into the great problems of religion. It gave him his first initiation into the Transcendental school of thought. Best of all it was humane, and so at once an incentive to the young man whose heart was already set upon the ministry, and a prophecy of what his own preaching was to be, written in larger character.

It was an incident of his acquaintance with Mr. Francis that he was soon made superintendent of the Sunday-school. It was no easy matter for the awkward, bashful youth to bear his "blushing honors." There are rumors of the extreme provincialism of his Sunday clothes, and others of that wholesome piety which bound all his years together in one fragrant sheaf. Here, as ever, what he did he did with all his might, writing a brief History of the Jews for his Bible-class, which might be cited as a witness of the soundness of his Unitarian orthodoxy before he had begun to think in any vigorous fashion. Miss

Lydia D. Cabot was one of the teachers in the Sunday-school, and moreover she was boarding under the same roof with Theodore, at Mrs. Broad's; and thus propinquity brought things to pass which under different circumstances might have been long delayed. Miss Cabot was the only daughter of John Cabot, of Newton, and had lived much with an aunt in Boston. Of her early life I have no details, but her future at least was secure when she and Theodore Parker were thus thrown together. Once a cordial relation had been established, the capabilities of Watertown were much enlarged, its scenery was appreciated as it had not been before, and the young man's library was correspondingly increased. Henceforth there were

> books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The business so auspiciously begun reached its preliminary climax in October, 1833, when we find Theodore walking over to Lexington one Sunday afternoon to tell his father all about it. This time he caught him in the garden, just returned from church, and confided to him what Miss Cabot called "the fatal affair." "Indeed!" said the father, "indeed!" — a response which did n't make it easier for Theodore to go on. But he had been rehearsing Lydia's good qualities all the way over and he now recited them with sufficient accuracy and amplitude. "Yes, yes!" replied the father; "I should be pleased with any one you would

select; but, Theodore, you must be a good *man* and a good *husband*, which is a great undertaking." "I promised all good fidelity," writes Theodore to Lydia, "and may Heaven see it kept." Which Heaven did.

The engagement thus made had the good fortune to be nursed by periods of absence alternating with joyous meetings. Theodore's letters tell of his hard studies and confess his late, or rather early hours, for sometimes Mrs. Broad's big lamp held out till two o'clock and left the student's hunger unappeased. On Lydia's side there are expostulations with him for these naughty ways. Let us trust that, as time went on, there were many foolish little nothings to counterbalance the fine sentiments, and didactic wisdom, and experiments in preaching, in which Theodore's letters abound. But with these things there are sweet and homely reminiscences of his earlier days, his mother's good-night kisses, and such other "narrow things of home" as his fond heart was never able to forget.

While teaching at Watertown he anticipated to some extent his Divinity School studies, going over to Cambridge to take lessons in Hebrew, and afterward to a Mr. Seixas, living in Charlestown, and to the Hebrew manner born. His teaching ended with the second year in April, 1834, when he entered the Divinity School at Cambridge for the last term of the junior year. He had saved enough money for the new venture, which required only $200 a year for expenses of all kinds, and he

had hopes of earning something by private teaching and writing — hopes only partially realized. He had won the love of his scholars, and on the last day of the school they surprised him with a silver cup, which had such an effect upon him that he vanished suddenly into the entry and came back with tell-tale eyes. In connection with his teaching and Hebrew and love-making he had found time at Watertown to read Cicero, Tacitus, Herodotus, Thucydides, Pindar, Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, Æschylus; doing much careful translation. Here, too, he fell in with Cousin and Jouffroy and Coleridge, and began to lay the foundations of a transcendental system of philosophy.

For a year or two in Cambridge his room was No. 29 Divinity Hall. In the same room for two years ('62–64), I enjoyed the inspiration of his "affable familiar ghost." It was the pleasantest room in the building, the front corner room towards the college buildings and on the upper floor. A better study he could not desire. In his time the bed in the snug alcove could not have been so hammock-like as it was in my time, but the bed for him was a necessary evil, only resorted to when sleep was overpowering or when eyesight failed. His attempts to board himself do not appear to me so dreadful as to Mr. Weiss, because I made such and enjoyed them for two years and a half out of my three years' course with no ill effects and a saving of enough money to buy two hundred books. In Parker's time it was all open field where the

great Agassiz Museum now affronts the modesty of theology with the pride of science. The wonder is that Parker did not, like Horatio Stebbins further on, economize the ground for the profitable raising of potatoes.[1] His classmates were Samuel P. Andrews, Richard T. Austin, John S. Dwight, of musical fame, George E. Ellis, historian and antiquarian, Oliver C. Everett, Abiel A. Livermore, sometime President of the Meadville Theological School, and William Silsbee, a man of finest grain in whom Parker found one of his dearest friends. Austin was named Seiders in his Divinity School days, but marrying Susan Austin took her name. He died in 1847, and his wife's loyalty to his memory showed itself in many years of kindness to Unitarian ministers both young and old, a kindness of which I enjoyed a liberal share. Her house, two centuries old and very quaint, on the day of Visitation used to shine with happy faces, while inextinguishable laughter made the old timbers thrill as with their vital sap.

In the senior class when Parker entered the school were Cyrus A. Bartol, Charles T. Brooks the German translator, Edgar Buckingham, one of the rarest of the saints, Christopher Cranch, who wrote many good poems and one of large repute,

[1] Just before Parker's time there had been a Horticultural Society in the School. One of its functions was the cultivation of this field in rival plots allotted to the Divinity Students. I have found its records interesting, especially Cranch's description of a "self-weeding apparatus," designed to make less arduous the labors of "the man with a hoe."

"Thought is deeper than all speech;" John Parkman of good anti-slavery fame, and Samuel Osgood, a man whose scholarship was sicklied over with the pale cast of his ecclesiastical proclivities. In the middle class the only names that have survived were those of John H. Morison, a faithful pastor and careful writer, and Henry T. Tuckerman, whose literary reputation, once considerable, time has already dimmed. In the class following Parker's were Henry W. Bellows, the eloquent preacher and inspiring Unitarian leader, organizer of the United States Sanitary Commission, and Edmund H. Sears, a poetic mystic, who, when rooming in No. 30 Divinity Hall, wrote his far-sounding hymn, "Calm on the listening ear of night."

Thus it appears that, though the school was numerically weak, it contained abundant material for friendship and mutual incitement to good works. Parker had been heard of in advance as a hard student and voracious reader, and possibly was somewhat isolated by his intense preoccupation with his books. But as yet everything was chaotic in his mind: the spirit of organized knowledge had not begun to move upon the face of the waters. His teachers were Professor John G. Palfrey, the coming of whose anti-slavery fame had not yet begun to shine, even far off, nor his fortunate mention in the "Biglow Papers" ("Wut! voted agin 'im!"); Henry Ware, Jr., whose "Oppression shall not always reign" did duty as an anti-slavery hymn in all the Unitarian churches

after 1843, when it was written as with the ebbing life-blood of the writer's heart; and Andrews Norton, whose large proportions as a scholar have been too much obscured, was, though withdrawn, a potent influence still. It fell to Professor Ware to criticise Theodore's experimental sermons, and he did so with something of that severity of which the saints have frequently enjoyed a disproportionate share. Here was something for tears in the little alcove where the soft-hearted boy got his precarious sleep. Evidently he was taking in too fast to give out anything well shaped. Like the apostle, he preached not himself as yet, but with a difference: he preached the books which he was reading in great heaps. He was better in debate, though sometimes "disrespectful of dignities," as when he cited "old Paul" as an authority and had to be advised by Professor Ware of the impropriety of such homely speech. In private discussion he waxed very warm sometimes, and when the question was of Philip Van Artevelde's conduct in beheading certain political enemies, Theodore lost his own head and turned his friend out of the room because he disapproved of Artevelde's course. At other times he was as full of fun as if he were getting his full share of sleep and exercise. Dwight and Cranch were, on one occasion, practicing with musical instruments in their room to the detriment of Parker's "quiet and still air of delightful studies." Sudden an awful discord smote the air. Parker had gone down into

the cellar and brought up the wood-horse, wood, and saw, and was sawing away with a right good-will to the utter destruction of their concord of sweet sounds.

Dr. Bartol recalls his exuberant life, his restless ambition to excel, "and an honesty that knew not how to lie;" his ruddy face and firm and eager grasp; a manner nothing if not natural; his "smile, frank as spring and sweet as summer;" also his ingenuous modesty and his ingenious arguments, every one of them with a corresponding knot tied in his handkerchief to help him keep the count. Another friend has told me of his glowing face and rapid stride and tossing mane of hair as he came back from Watertown with an armful of books borrowed from Mr. Francis, the libraries of the Divinity School and College not being sufficient to meet all his wants, and, possibly, a little slow in getting those German novelties which Professor Norton disesteemed as much as Mr. Francis cared for them.

In a letter written about three months after his entering the school, there is, perhaps, no malice in the item: "Prayers are performed [*sic*] at morning of every day by Professor Palfrey and at evening by one of the senior class." Such prayers were certainly less objectionable than those demanded in connection with the experimental preaching in the little chapel of the Hall. Later a student, more sincere than suave, after going through the prescribed order, besought the divine blessing on

"these miserable gymnastics." Besides the regular routine work of the school there was a "Philanthropic Society" which met once a fortnight, and discussed "some interesting subject, such as 'Infidelity,' 'Temperance,' 'The License Laws.'" Could we have a full report of Parker's contribution to the discussion of Infidelity it would, probably, be amusing in the light of subsequent events. A fine lad came to him to recite Greek every morning, and a young gentleman had set out to study German with him, but after a few lessons had vanished into thin air. Before the end of his first term he was at work for Jared Sparks, translating Lafayette's letters, and the work lasted through his whole vacation. With such helps and an annual benefice of "$110 or $150," the small library which he had taken away from home when he went to Boston was sure to grow apace.

At the very outset of his theological course he gives an outline of his opinions, responding it would seem to some anxiety on the part of his nephew Columbus Greene. What Columbus discovered was as follows: —

I believe in the Bible. . . . I believe there is *one* God, who has existed from all eternity, with whom the past, present, and future are alike present; that he is almighty, good, and merciful, will reward the good and punish the wicked, both in this life and the next. This punishment *may be* eternal; of course, I believe that neither the rewards nor punishments of a future state are corporal. Bodily pleasures soon satiate, and may God

preserve us from a worse punishment than one's own conscience.

I believe the books of the Old and New Testament to have been written by men inspired by God, for certain purposes, but I do not think of them as inspired *at all times*. I believe that Christ was the Son of God, conceived and born in a miraculous manner, that he came to preach a better religion by which man may be saved.

This religion, as I think, allows men the very highest happiness in this life, and promises eternal felicity in another world. I do not think our sins will be forgiven because Christ died. I cannot conceive why they should be, although many good and great men have thought so. I believe God knows all that we shall do, but does not *cause* us to do anything.

Here is the conventional note. It may not have been up to the nephew's orthodox standard, but for a neat and comfortable statement of the conservative Unitarianism of the time one might go farther without faring better. It was not long, however, before the coming man began to cast his shadow, — if I should not say "his light," — upon the student's journal and his letters to inquiring friends. He fell out with the early Fathers in the course of 1835. Jerome's faculties were moderate. He was not a good scholar. "He *tasted* theology rather than exhausted it" — a common fault; "he wrote his works in great haste." St. Augustine fares worse. He, "we all know, introduced more error into the Church than any other man. Many of his doctrines fly in the face both of reason and virtue, to extinguish the eyes of the one and stifle the

breath of the other." As for Tertullian, "He thought faith which contradicted reason most acceptable to God." He thought the soul material and *sky-blue*. Finally he is summed up as "one of the worst curses to the human race that has occurred since the Flood."

From doubts about the Fathers to some that touched Old Testament matters was a distance covered in due time. In November, 1835, he finished reading De Wette's "Commentary on the Psalms," and wrote, "He treats the Messianic interpretation of the Psalms as a mere chimera; which it is in my humble opinion." But he was very slow in arriving at any serious rupture with his inherited beliefs. His supernaturalism was well intrenched: —

> I do not doubt that Jesus was a man "sent from God" and endowed with power from on high; that he taught the truth and worked miracles: but that he was the subject of inspired prophecy I very much doubt.

Here was an outpost gone. For a time, it being evident to him that Jesus regarded himself as an object of prophetical anticipation, he took refuge in that miserable subterfuge of "accommodation" which lagged superfluous on the stage in my Divinity School days. This subterfuge represented Jesus as not believing in the prophecies of his life and death, but as accommodating himself to the superstitions of his countrymen — a scheme which saved his intellect at the cost of his morality.

On the eve of Parker's graduation Dr. Dewey preached the Dudleian Lecture. It found Parker's confidence in miracles still unshaken, but lent it a few needless buttresses: "He removed the presumption against them. The objections were not only met but overturned." But that he thought the miracles "the least interesting part of the Evidences" was a foregleam of his "Transient and Permanent in Christianity," which had then five years to tarry in the preëxistent heavens. Moreover he had discovered that several and more religions had their virgin births, and a doubt concerning that of Jesus painfully intrudes. He consoles himself with the reflection that such things do not affect the spiritual grandeur of Jesus, which is the chief concern.

In 1831 Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett had launched a tiny magazine, "The Scriptural Interpreter." It was intended for family instruction and served its end in a careful and extremely modest way. Mr. Gannett falling sick, it was committed to the care of Parker and his classmates Ellis and Silsbee. Its brief existence ended with the year 1836, but during their charge they did work for it that should have secured for it a longer lease of life, themselves writing the larger and best part of each number. There was no daring novelty, but a cautious tendency to accept some of the later results of German criticism of the Old Testament. Questions of Messianic prophecy and the Pentateuch's authorship were touched with faint illumination,

the candles lighted at Eichhorn's and De Wette's cheerful lamps and at that modest one which Astruc, the French physician, trimmed in 1753 and which has thrown its beams so far into our own time. His was the first discovery of two documents in the Pentateuch so loosely blended as to disclose their secret to the first observant eye. In 1834, Dr. George R. Noyes, who in 1840 became a professor in the Divinity School, published an article on the Messianic prophecies, taking frank issue with Hengstenberg's opinion that the Old Testament phrases corresponded to New Testament facts. "It is difficult," he said, "to point out any predictions which have been fulfilled in Jesus." Here was of course an indirect impeachment of the New Testament also, the edge of which Parker, as we have seen, blunted by the critical artifice called "accommodation." Attorney-General James T. Austin demanded Dr. Noyes's public prosecution, and proceedings to that effect were instituted, but nipped by an untimely frost of cold New England common sense. The "Scriptural Interpreter" followed Dr. Noyes's lead with careful steps. As for the different documents in the Pentateuch, might not Moses have used them and fused them? The linguistic argument against the authorship of Moses, Parker rejected as insignificant, and, quoting Delany as believing in the universality of the Deluge, he adds, "as who does not?" When he is apologizing for the massacres of the Canaanites, we seem to have a modern Jingo come to trouble

us before his time. "It must be remembered, the nations to be extirpated were exceedingly vicious and corrupt; and, if suffered to remain, would doubtless have led away the Jews from their better faith." The "Interpreter" was a very "bashful earthquake," and yet it affected some people's nerves in the habitual seismic manner. One of them, suffering from the shock of a doubt as to Isaiah 52d which the "Interpreter" has suggested, demands: —

> What could possess you? What is the object of the theologians at Cambridge? Are they determined to break down the prophecies and make our blessed Saviour and his Apostles impostors and liars? . . . Where is it all to end? . . . Pause, I beseech you, before it is too late. I am a well wisher to your work. I have always been a subscriber. But another such blow and I must quit all I value; my religious faith above all things else. I cannot part with it. To escape shipwreck I must jump overboard before the last plank is taken away. And not I alone. Hundreds must do the same. . . . Mr. Noyes strikes a blow and alarms a sect. Mr. Peabody [1] recovers the ground for a moment, by holding on to a few passages. The "Interpreter" follows to destroy one of the most essential of these few. The end cannot be far off.

The mixed metaphors in this letter betray a reeling brain. The writer was a nervous wreck. What would he have been could he have had an authentic vision of the state of Old Testament

[1] Andrew P. Peabody, who had graduated from the Divinity School in 1832.

criticism in the year 1900, when the little finger of the orthodox critic is thicker than the thigh of the most radical Unitarian in 1836 as concerns the structure of the Pentateuch and Messianic prophecy? Touching New Testament matters, — "Alleged Mistakes of the Apostles," — we find Parker demurring at conclusions which a few years later Dr. Noyes was urging on the Divinity School students in a frank and fearless manner. If Paul was mistaken, said Parker, about the coming world-catastrophe, his teachings in general must have been discredited. He did better with the Laws of Moses, writing an analysis of them that showed careful study. Here and there, it shows how carefully he was "inching along" from his earlier to his later views. He is disposed to relieve Jehovah from the burden of the "sanguinary laws," first shifting them on to Moses's back and then to his environment. Not without much well-meant advice and warning did he, even so gradually, leave the snug harbor of traditional opinion for the wide and open sea. Mr. Andrews Norton assured him privately that all the German scholars were "raw" and "not accurate;" that they were "naturally unfitted for metaphysics, and their language still more so." Schleiermacher was no better than Spinoza, and "gave up all that renders Christianity valuable." The next day he was again hit hard. A Boston Doctor of Divinity was sorry to see his article in the "Interpreter" on Isaiah's "Servant of God."

The Cambridge years were very studious years for Parker over and above the exigencies of the regular course. To languages before studied he added Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Icelandic, Chaldaic, Persian, Coptic, Arabic, and made attempts upon some others, Swedish, Danish, and modern Greek. Mr. Weiss, who tells us that "he always seemed to have a language under glass," says that his habit was to first master the structure and derivation of a language and, afterward, its vocabulary. When he made mistakes, as he sometimes did later in life, they were "oftener in the meaning of words than in the idiom and structure." One of the professors is said to have consulted him on nice points of Hebrew and Syriac, and it is an established fact that when Dr. Palfrey went to New Orleans for a visit in 1836 he handed over to Parker the junior class in Hebrew.

Meantime the reading of German authors and scholars, against whom Professor Norton had faithfully warned him, grew apace and took on large proportions. Paulus and his naturalism got careful attention, and the works of Eichhorn and De Wette. He wrote out many elaborate translations, among them (completing it in West Roxbury) the whole of Ammon's "Formation of Christianity," one of the plausible reconciliations of things irreconcilable that have long since sunk into deserved oblivion. But there were lighter tasks. He did not deceive himself with the self-flattery that he was a poet — he lamented his lack of the poet's "dangerous

gift; " but he could not refrain from writing verses, some of which, earlier and later, were pretty bad; others much better, those especially which had a religious inspiration. One set of them, having the form of a Shakespearean sonnet, was written in December, 1836, and expresses, though not so well as another in the same form and which is better known, that reverence for the character of Jesus which was continuous throughout his life: —

Jesus, there is no dearer name than thine,
Which time has blazoned on his mighty scroll;
No wreaths nor garlands ever did entwine
So fair a temple of so vast a soul.
There every virtue set his triumph seal;
Wisdom conjoined with strength and radiant grace,
In a sweet copy Heaven to reveal,
And stamp perfection on a mortal face;
Once on the earth wert Thou, before men's eyes,
That did not half thy beauteous brightness see;
E'en as the emmet does not read the skies,
Nor our weak orbs look through immensity.
Once on the earth wert Thou, a living shrine,
Where dwelt the good, the lovely, the divine.[1]

In the spring of 1836 he took a pleasure trip as far as Washington, and in the Senate happened on the " Bill for Preventing the Circulation of Incendiary Matters " through the mails. In Parker's letter to Miss Cabot there is no resentment of Calhoun's opinions prophetic of the coming man; only a genial characterization. He saw Van Buren, " the little magician," gliding about and clapping

[1] This sonnet is quite different in Weiss's and Frothingham's versions. I follow Weiss's, which is evidently a later and certainly a better form.

men on the shoulders, and Clay, tall and homely, walking about in a dignified manner. Back again in Cambridge and hard at work on the "History of Gnosticism," the subject of his graduation essay, and fighting the blue devils which now, as before in Boston, and later, from time to time, beset his jaded mind, he assures his Lydia that he does not speculate on their cause. "It is enough to *bear* them without going about to analyze the nature of the complaint." How thorough he made his study of Gnosticism we can judge from the articles on this subject which he published in the "Interpreter." May 8, 1836, he preaches for the last time in the Hall Chapel. "Hereafter I hope to preach to real live men and women." July 4, he writes: —

> Last night I preached *publicly* in Mr. Newell's church. This is the first time in my life that I have preached to a real *live* audience. I felt much embarrassed; though perhaps it did not show forth. Lydia, my own Lydia, and her aunt, came over with me. I was less pleased with myself than they were with me.

The prayer which he wrote that evening in his journal was a deep and tender one for strength and wisdom to discharge the duties of the sacred office on which he was about to enter. "Visitation Day" came a little later in the month, "a day of trembling," as he wrote, for the little company of graduates, each, no doubt, "hiding an awkward delivery" in a gown borrowed for the occasion from some clergyman in the vicinity. My own

class, in 1864, was the first to break this record. The exercises "went off well." He wrote: —

> God has prospered me in my studies and I am now ready to go forth, but not without dread and fear. What an immense change has taken place in my opinions and feelings upon all the main points of inquiry since I entered this place.

Such an expression gives us at once the measure of his original conservatism and of the remaining part — a good part of the whole, but opening slowly to the light. The next Sunday he preached for Mr. Francis in Watertown; then he and Lydia had a fortnight together free from all care; and then the sorrows of an itinerant candidate began.

## CHAPTER III

### THE YOUNG MINISTER

NEARING his twenty-sixth birthday in 1836 Theodore Parker was, at his entrance on the ministry, older than the majority of those who enter this profession, but hardly more mature except in scholarship. From the start his preaching manifested qualities that were a surprise to those who knew the habits of his mind and anticipated for him a scholarly career, with a professor's chair in Hebrew or some other language as its happy goal. The surprise was shared by those who invited him to preach in their churches, not knowing what manner of spirit he was of. The fame that everywhere preceded him was that of a young man of remarkable intellectual attainments, versed in many languages and a devourer of many books. Meeting him face to face and hearing such sermons as he had to preach, they found him human to a degree their candidates and settled preachers had not often reached. It is true that in his proverbial barrel, which at this period was but a little keg, there were sermons that smelt of the lamp; and it is true that he was grieved because these did not make the impression which he thought they

ought to make, and that others were preferred whose smell was of the wholesome earth. But in general his liberation from the cloister into the larger air beyond its narrow bounds, the purer air unspoiled by musty books, was a signal for the rapid development of traits that were to be much more characteristic of his maturity than his scholarly acquisition and to go far to make him one of the most real and effective preachers of his own or any time. The sweet humanity which his bookishness had for a time somewhat obscured now forced its way through that, like spring flowers breaking through the March and April sods, to sweeten the inclement air. Especially in his letters and his journals do we find many intimations of that homely vigor which the farm life of Lexington had nourished in his spiritual frame, and of that tender piety which he had learned "at that best academe, a mother's knee."

The favorable impression made by his early preaching was qualified to some extent by rumors of his liberal theology. It did not take many such rumors in those times to give a candidate a bad name and keep him in suspense, while others who were above suspicion, or possibly below it, soon found a place. Here and there, no doubt, it was already whispered that he was a Transcendentalist; worse omen because the meaning of the label transcended the average intelligence. It was known, however, that Mr. Emerson was one, and that he had resigned his charge in Boston because he could

not conscientiously administer the Lord's Supper. The Unitarian parishes of 1836 would fain avoid the reefs and shoals which had been buoyed for them so carefully by that notorious event. Perhaps, then, it was not strange that Theodore remained upon the anxious seat of candidature nearly a whole year. Much stranger was the fact that in the way of overtures from different churches there was finally an embarrassment of riches. Waltham and Concord and Leominster and West Roxbury invited him to remain, and Barnstable, the scene of his first venture, would have joined the suitors had the young preacher given the least encouragement. But he was not one of those candidates to whom a string of calls is a proud trophy, like a string of scalps hung from an Indian's belt. He was sincerely anxious to make no mistake at the outset and to obey the call that seemed most consonant with his abilities and with the likelihood of his making a good use of them.

In August, following his graduation in July, he went to Barnstable on the southeast coast of Massachusetts in the good schooner Sappho, and continued preaching there a month. It was a busy month for him: two sermons every Sunday and, on one, two funerals beside. There was much calling on the people, who at first seemed offish but afterward kindly and intelligent. He botanizes, and studies the local mineralogy, and finds "a sort of mental crystallization going on within him which brings order out of chaos." He had put a dozen

solid books in his small trunk and a good stock of sermon-paper, but books and paper both gave out: "The air of the place braces my whole soul; I could devour a whole library in a week." He goes over to Eastham to a Methodist camp meeting and walks back — thirty miles. August 11th he finished a sermon and

began to translate De Wette's "Einleitung in das Alte Testament." I cannot tell what will be the result of this. I shall leave that for another time to determine. Meanwhile I will go on translating it quietly, as I wish, without interrupting important studies.

This translation, with his additions, notes, and comments, proved to be the most important study of his life, his *opus magnum*. He planned greater things, but they were pushed aside by his engrossment in the anti-slavery conflict. He finished the translation, in nine months and as many days, May 20, 1837, but then the hardest part remained to be done — that of revision, annotation, and dissertation.

September and October, following the Barnstable trial, find him at Northfield and Greenfield on the Connecticut River, delighting in the scenery and also in Emerson's "Nature," which had just appeared. It is too idealistic for his fancy, but overflows with beauty and truth: "Blessed is the man who stoops and tastes of them!" If many of his days at Northfield were like one that is reported, Lydia had good reason to "hang the leaden

collar of 'Be careful and not do too much' about his neck," and let him object if he would. Rising at seven, before the midday meal he read the books of Esther, Nehemiah, Solomon's Song, first twelve chapters of Isaiah; wrote part of a sermon; finished one hundred and fifty pages of Allan's "Life of Scott" and two of Herder's "Briefe." After dinner read in a desultory manner; walked two or three miles; found a queer plant; gathered chestnuts; geologized a little; went to ride with Dr. Hall; took tea; Mr. N. called and "stayed two hours at least." The sense of being defrauded of more reading time by the final incident is unmistakable.

In November he returns to Barnstable and while there hears of his father's death. The good man had lived seventy-five years. Theodore had hoped they might be lengthened out, but he rejoices that they were so many and so full of traits and incidents that he can remember gratefully. He did not deceive himself: the father's memory was during Theodore's lifetime — only two thirds that of his father's — a never-failing source of human sympathy. Other news came to him at Barnstable — that Mr. Andrews Norton, who had resigned his professorship, had replied sharply in the "Boston Advertiser" to a favorable review of Martineau's "Rationale of Religious Inquiry" which Rev. George Ripley had written for the "Christian Examiner." Parker resented Mr. Norton's interference and the manner of it in a letter to a friend.

The incident is very properly regarded by Mr. Frothingham as "the first gun of a long battle." Shall we not rather say "of a long campaign," in the course of which Theodore Parker, at first a private soldier, came to be the commanding general of the insurrectionary forces, leading them valiantly, not without sore anxiety and many grievous wounds?

The closing weeks of 1836 found him preaching in Salem, visiting his classmates Silsbee and Andrews, and enjoying an unwonted opportunity for intercourse with people of much refinement and intelligence. His list of books read during the year numbers 320 volumes, and his plans for the coming year are so ambitious as to be dizzying to any ordinary mind. It is hard to find a principle of order in an agglomeration ranging from "Jacob Faithful" on the one hand, to "English State Trials" and "Roman Public Instruction" on the other. There was more method in the madness of his scheme of theological study. It reveals him in a posture like that of Milton's "tawny lion pawing to get free His hinder parts." There is as yet no question of the reality of supernatural religion, but — "What is the extent of known supernatural revelation?" — "The design of miracles? the pretense of them in other religions?" "The resurrection: How is the resurrection of matter proof of the immortality of spirit? Is not the material resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ unspiritualizing?" Such were

a few of the problems which engaged his interest and which were "significant of much" because here was actually a truth-seeker and not merely a young man engaged in the attempt to make his inherited opinions plausible and satisfactory.

January and February of the new year find him again at Northfield and Greenfield delighting in the winter wind and weather: —

> A single walk along the banks of the Connecticut or among the hills . . . has taught me more than Mr. Emerson and all the Boston Association of Ministers.

But he is not unmindful of these either, especially when Professor Francis Bowen of Harvard attacks Emerson's "Nature" in the "Examiner." The frolic temper of the man, irrepressible henceforth, and troublesome to many, escapes in a letter to a classmate: —

> Kant, Fichte, Schelling appeared to me in a vision of the night and deplored their sad estate. "Transcendentalism is clean gone," said Kant. "Verdammt!" said Fichte. "What shall we do?" exclaimed Schelling. They could not be appeased.

Possibly it was the poetry in "Nature," and not the philosophy, that Professor Bowen could not abide, for it was he who denounced Wordsworth's "Daffodils" as miserable doggerel, so that it would seem that any real poetry must have been abhorrent to his mind.

Theodore was in more haste to be married than to be settled, yet to be married and *not* settled was

not the haven where he would be. The two things went together in his hopes and plans. In February he is writing Miss Cabot: —

> Only think that after a little bit of courtship of some four years we are on the very brink of Matrimony! Within a span's length of the abyss! Without a parish too! 520 dollars a year may be — may be much less — to support a wife. Why, I intend to commence such a rigorous system of *sparing* that I shall never cross a *t* nor dot an *i*; for I 'll save ink.

He had dreamed the night before of going into a bookstore and finding some books he had long wanted, villainously cheap, and of his answering the proprietor: —

> I shall *never* buy any more books; . . . I *am going to be married.* But (he adds) if soft words can win hard coin, if there is any money-getting virtue in a knowledge of some twenty tongues, any talent in my mind, or any magic in the most unshrinking labor, I will take care that a wife do not beggar a soul of the means of growth and nobleness. If I can find anything to do in the literary way which will get one coin, be it never so hard, so it conflict with no duty, I will put forth my might, be it little, be it much.

In the event his twenty tongues added nothing to, and deducted much from, his pecuniary ability. It was by what he spoke with the understanding that he was to profit withal. The languages were like the monster jealousy: they mocked the meat they fed on; and, like the vampire, would have more. More books, and that continually. As

with his languages, so with his literary product: for the most part, except as this was embodied in lectures delivered up and down the land, it brought him little money.

Events now trod upon each other's heels. On April 20, his marriage with Miss Cabot took place. Just a month later, as we have seen, he finished the translation of De Wette's "Introduction." Three days from this provisional conclusion, May 23, there came a call from the Spring Street Society, West Roxbury, to which he had preached several times, making a good impression. The salary was small — $600 — less than was offered by some of the rival claimants, but Cambridge with its library was near, and Mr. Francis with his, and in Boston were the bookstores, and Dr. Channing and other men upon whose minds he hoped to sharpen his own. Then, too, there were people in the West Roxbury society — the Shaws, and Russells, and others — who made it peculiarly attractive. The call was accepted, and the ordination and installation were solemnized on the 21st of June. Almost every name upon the list of the ordaining clergy has enjoyed persistent reputation. Mr. Francis preached the sermon and warned the young minister not to neglect his studies. Henry Ware, Jr., offered the ordaining prayer, and remembering Theodore's "fondness for peculiar studies" in the Divinity School, prayed that no such fondness might divert him from doing God's work. Caleb Stetson, one of the rarest in

a body of preachers that had many wits, delivered the charge. George Ripley of Brook Farm and other good report gave the right hand of fellowship. John Pierpont and John S. Dwight, both real poets, each furnished a hymn. One would be glad to know that Dwight's was his

> Sweet is the pleasure
> Itself cannot spoil;
> Is not true pleasure
> One with true toil?

which has enjoyed a literally singular distinction not wholly unlike that of Cranch's "Thought is deeper than all speech." Dwight's would have been a splendid prophecy of such rest as Parker found in his unceasing work. But in fact it made its first appearance in the first number of the "Dial," following a sermon of Dwight's, "The Religion of Beauty."

Under such auspices began a ministry that was to continue for nine years and to prove a more eventful one than Parker himself or any of the ordaining clergy could so much as dream. The parish numbered about sixty families varying through such degrees of means and culture as included "rich men living peaceably in their habitations" and suburban farmers whose likeness to his father and other Lexington farmers must have done Parker good. His little white house [1] was a mile

[1] Making a pilgrimage to it May 28, 1899, I found that it had undergone much change since Parker's time, but the rooms in the main part retained their original character, and Parker's study was easily identified. Shortly after I learned that the place had been

distant from the church, and was comfortable enough, with a garden on which to prove that his hands had not lost the cunning they had learned tending his father's trees and vines. His little plot adjoined the extensive grounds of Mr. George R. Russell, a notable parishioner and friend, and next to these were those of Francis George Shaw,[1] father of the heroic Robert Gould Shaw and of other children who are still serving God in their own way; the wife, also, full of years and kindness and large-hearted sympathies. Here were gardens of refreshment out of doors, and to yet better purpose, and affording finer fruits and flowers, within doors, where there was taste and refinement, interest in all the living books and questions of the time, pregustation of papers written for the "Dial," some ventures in poetics, young people's sprightliness and laughter; sometimes, perhaps, at the expense of Mr. Alcott's "Orphic Sayings" and other things with which the "Dial" confounded the denser minds of an untoward generation. In these pleasant families Parker wore off some of the angles which had survived the social opportunities he had so far enjoyed. The new-found happiness was dangerous, but not fatal, nor even harmful, to his parochial work. He neglected none of the humbler sort to "chaffer with the fine ladies," but made friends with rich and poor

purchased by Roman Catholics and that one of their priests was to live there. What a chance for ghostly visitation!

[1] A literary man of business, whose translation of *Consuelo* was an important feature in Ripley's *Harbinger*.

alike. Indeed, the farmers had a peculiar grip on him through his long association with their kind.

His domestic happiness was not selfishly enjoyed. The "prophet's chamber" was always swept and garnished for Silsbee, Cranch, or some other schoolmate to come in and make himself at home. Parker's laborious studies did not shut him up in narrow isolation. The gentle wife was always hungry for those outward shows of love which he could easily supply. He was never more ironical than when he made "Bearsie" his pet name for her,[1] so little roughness of any kind was there about her. She had Shakespeare's ideal voice, "soft, gentle, and low," almost too bodiless. Intellectually she was not Parker's mate, but love was ever, to his thinking, "the greatest thing in the world," and she gave him abundantly of that. When years had passed and no children had been born to him, his fear of being always childless was a burden greater than he could bear with cheerfulness, and to it may be ascribed some of the darkest clouds that settled on his mind. When the fear had grown to certainty, it was a perpetual void aching for the comfort that he must forego. He was very fond of Henry Alger, a son of Rev. William R. Alger, a boy of great promise which was suddenly cut off. Henry was very dear to me

[1] Suggested by her exaggerated interest in the bears she saw in Berne, when she was in Switzerland with her husband in 1844.

also for a few years just after Parker's death. There was a merry swarm of children in the Alger house and Parker loved them dearly. Once when he was going away after a frolic with them, he said to Mrs. Alger, "I am the worst hated man in America, and have no children."

Somewhere along in the first Roxbury years his wife went visiting and the journal reads: —

> At home nominally; but since wife is gone my home is in New Jersey. I miss her absence — wicked woman! — most exceedingly. I cannot sleep or eat or work without her. It is not so much the affection she bestows on me as that she receives by which I am blessed. I want some one always in the arms of my heart to caress and comfort: unless I have this, I mourn and weep. But soon I shall go to see the girl once more. Meantime and all time heaven bless her! I can do nothing without Lydia — not even read.

His physical energy in these years was fully equal to the intellectual enthusiasm if not to the attendant strain. He was a vigorous walker, doing his visiting to Boston and the neighboring towns on foot, often making from ten to twenty miles a day. He walked all the way from Boston to New York, his daily allowance being about thirty miles. The bracing air in the White Mountains inspired more memorable feats. Yet somewhere in his constitution there was a root of bitterness which bore a flower of melancholy hue. It may have been nourished by that consumptive habit of his family which so shortened his own life

and permitted only one of his elders in the family to outlast his narrow span. But this habit, generally, giving the brain an over-stock of blood, tends to a deceitful optimism and exhilaration. Probably, then, we must look elsewhere for the cause of his depression: to the exhaustion of protracted thought and study; to the contradiction between his sense of power and his ability to give it adequate expression; as time went on to the slights of valued friends, to which he could not have been more sensitive than he was; and close at home there was the growing consciousness that the wife, so tenderly loved and cared for and so exigent in her demands on his affection, was so constituted that she could not share his intellectual life. It was different with his humanitarian spirit as this gradually developed. Into this she entered heartily and with much sound discrimination both of men and things.

However caused, his periods of depression were of less frequent occurrence and their term was shorter than I had been led to believe in advance of my personal studies, though Mr. Frothingham's opinion that perhaps a dozen times would cover all of their recurrences is, probably, too genial to be just. Only his most intimate friends would have known that there were such periods if his journals had not come to light. Even for these they were relatively unimportant. The sufferer did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for friends to stroke and soothe. And as for his sermons, bulkheads fire-

proof and water-tight separated them from the compartments in which his moral indigo was packed away. Their note habitually was that of perfect health and radiant cheerfulness. It was hardly different with the public prayers, though here and there,

> from the soul's subterranean depth upborne,
> As from an infinitely distant land,
> Come airs and floating echoes that convey —

a sympathy with others' misery which is eloquent of the reality of the personal experience from which it springs.

Before his assumption of the West Roxbury pastorate, Parker had written about forty sermons. Probably few ministers have had so large a stock on the eve of their first settlement. A dozen is above the average number; some of these so unsatisfactory that the young candidate has been known to borrow a classmate's fledgeling as a mate for his own best, when making a first venture into the open field. Parker tells us that his first sermons were only imitations. Even where the thought was fresh, the form was the old, stereotyped conventionalism. Nevertheless he began well: —

> At the beginning I resolved to preach the natural laws of man as they are writ in his constitution, no less and no more. After preaching a few months in various places, and feeling my way into the consciousness of man, I determined to preach nothing as religion which I had not experienced inwardly and made my own — knowing it by heart.

Seven of his forty sermons written in advance of his settlement were Divinity School products. Among the subjects were, "Disinterested Virtue," "Necessity of an Honest Life," "Religion a Principle and a Sentiment." The last named was born again in one of the "West Roxbury Sermons," — "The Influence of Religion upon the Feelings," — and it shows how soon he entered upon one of his most characteristic lines. "West Roxbury Sermons" is a volume published in 1892. It was edited by my friend Samuel J. Barrows, Mr. Frank B. Sanborn furnishing a biographical sketch. The book is indispensable for those desiring to obtain a sound appreciation of Parker's West Roxbury preaching. Before he went to Boston he preached three hundred and sixty-two sermons to the West Roxbury congregation. His exchanges must have been frequent, seeing that he preached seven hundred and sixty-six times all told in the West Roxbury years. His ultimate number of sermons was nine hundred and twenty-five, and he kept a systematic record of all his "Preachings," as the book is named. Hence it is easy to discover on what sermons he set the seal of his own approval: one of them he preached twenty-five times; others ten or twelve. It is, then, as if Mr. Barrows were following Parker's own advice when he chose the sermons Parker oftenest fell back upon. Of the fifteen sermons chosen, six were delivered before the famous South Boston sermon of 1841 and nine after it. A few were delivered both in Boston and

West Roxbury, affording evidence that there was no violent break in the manner of his preaching when he left the suburban for the city parish.

During his first year in Roxbury his sermons were simple and practical, the young man putting behind him with much self-denial and great strength of will the stores of book-learning he had already amassed. He was soon acquainted with every member of his little parish and knew each one's character and thoughts. He took great pains with his sermons; they were never out of his mind, and his delight in writing them and preaching them was intense. These are his own words, not inferences or reports. There were sermons named "The Use of Crosses," "The Duty of Veracity," "Self-Renewal," "Tranquillity," "A Penny a Day," and so on. His habit of naming his sermons dated from the first attempt. It implied a distinct formulation of his idea every time, no mere expansion or attenuation of a Scripture text, though each sermon had its text as well as its title, generally, if not always, his life long. He writes of his early preaching: "The simple life of the farmers, mechanics, and milkmen about me, of its own accord, turned into a sort of poetry and reappeared in the sermons, as the green woods not far off looked into the windows of the meeting-house."

There was a sermon on "The Temptations of Milkmen," which must, it would seem, have borrowed something of the milkmen's skill in watering their stock, to make it fill the measure of the habit-

ual half hour. In the sermon on "Tranquillity" the fable was one which challenged personal application before many years had passed: "In thinking upon religious concerns, let all haste and violence and impetuosity be laid aside; then, if at no other time, men should be calm." In "The World belongs to Each Man" we have one of those homely touches which became more frequent as his work advanced and gave his sermons their most attractive quality: —

> He who is a true and sound man in the city rejoices at the bales of goods he sees in the streets, in the great ships that bring us the fruits of other lands, in the wealth of the warehouse, in the splendor of the buildings, without dreaming of ownership. . . . The rose in the garden wafts its fragrance to the boy in the street; it is as grateful to him as to the man in whose garden it grows.

In this sermon he quotes the great phrase of Emerson, "Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous," but he does not name Emerson, perhaps because he wished the phrase to stand on its own feet, unbiased by the prejudice against Emerson begotten of his resignation of his Boston charge and the reasons given for that act.

In the sermon called "Application of Religion to Life" (1840) there is a suggestive glance at the reformatory movements of the time. He finds the temperance and anti-slavery and peace societies "pleasing and promising." "But as yet this ac-

tion is only superficial and partial, and human passions sometimes interrupt the work. The reformer leans to one side, and will see but a single vice." If he meant Garrison there, he certainly did not yet know him. This braver thought comes uppermost as he goes on: —

> But now when Christianity nods over her Bible and sleeps in her pew of a Sunday, while she makes slaves or keeps them, and strives to render the rich richer and the poor poorer all the week, the world cannot afford to be nice and criticise the only men who are awake and striving to do the world service.

In "A Sermon on Man" we have for the first time those pigeonholes which served Parker so conveniently all his life long, when he would separate the nature of man into its constituent parts: senses, understanding, moral sense, affections, the religious element. And with this separation we have the exaltation of the religious element which held throughout his course. A sermon on "The Crucifixion," written the year following the South Boston sermon, speaks of Jesus as "the Saviour and Redeemer of the World" with quiet confidence. But we may well believe that there were drops of his own heart's blood mixed with the ink with which he wrote this sermon, such a crucifixion had been his personal experience since that most fateful day of his career; to his sensibility each little wound counting for more than great ones to a man made of more leathery stuff.

In a sermon on "Christian Advancement"

there is good evolutionary doctrine, at least sixteen years before Darwin's "Origin of Species," but for this he need not have gone further than the motto of Emerson's "Nature" or to the wonderful passage in the chapter on Nature in the second series of Emerson's essays, which was of the same date with Parker's sermon (1844). If Parker's statement lacked originality it shows, at least, how kindly he took to the idea of organic development.

In the visible world there is what philosophy calls a law of continuity. All is done gradually, nothing by leaps. Invisibly the vegetable and animal world approach and intermingle. You cannot tell where the mineral kingdom begins, and the animal ends. They must be distinguished by their centre, not their circumference; by a type, not a limit. There are visible links that connect beast and bird, fish and insect. In animals lower down you see hints that a man is yet to be. In man you see as it were vestiges of the lower animals, a certain bruteness which it is difficult to explain, perhaps more difficult to manage. This brute element sometimes astonishes you in yourself.

Clearly he is thinking of his own mother when he writes in the same sermon: —

The best part of many a man's wisdom has come to him thence, when she laid her hand, now still in death, on his childish head and smoothed down his silken and boyish hair, and taught him of God, of conscience, of righteousness, and, awaking the devotion of his young heart, bade him fly toward heaven on his half-fledged wings.

In the same sermon there is a splendid representation of "the growth of a soul" prophetic of his own development.[1]

In the sermon on "Prayer and Intercourse with God" we have the higher waters of a stream that deepened and widened as his life flowed on to the wide valley lands which it enriched with its abounding flood. He would have every man, "young or old, set apart one half hour or half of that, for communing with himself and his God each day;" "shut out the world and open his windows toward truth and God, and seriously think and really pray." In "God's Income to Man" there is one of his terrible pictures of a man who has misused his life, "a man with large powers, exceeding great, but proud, rebellious, violent, and self-willed — a snaky-minded man, forever in a coil, or moving with a wriggling gait from thought to thought . . . counting it life to shed a poison glitter in the sun, and with discordant thrust to hiss at passers-by, or lurking in the grass, with calumnious tooth to bite at a good man's heel." Here already we have the words shaping themselves upon the fact with that passion for reality which made the sermons of his full maturity so poignant in their thrusts at individual faults, so expressive of the preacher's sympathy with the struggles, sins, and sorrows of the men and women whom he would help to climb life's "steep-up heavenly hill."

With such preaching and a beauty in his life

[1] *West Roxbury Sermons*, pp. 138, 139.

that answered to the demands he made on others, it was not strange that his people valued him highly. But his craving for intellectual and spiritual companionship took him frequently beyond his parish bounds. He went to Dr. Francis most for books and talk about them, to George Ripley and Dr. Channing oftenest for help in solving problems that were pressing on his mind. At one time we find Ripley and his wife staying at Roxbury a whole week. "We were full of joy and laughter all the time of their visit." Here was a chance to settle the foundations of the universe till the next serious shock. In the winter of 1838–39 he writes that he has not been to see Dr. Channing so often as before, though he likes to go as much as ever. At their last meeting Dr. Channing had praised his review of Ackermann's "Das Christliche in Plato" in the "Examiner," but thought he had not done justice to the superiority of Christian morals over those of all previous systems, by which opinion Parker was made sorry. They discussed conscience. Parker thought it infallible; Channing took the more modern view — that it is not. "He said conscience was like the *eye*, which might be dim or might be wrong." Parker demurred and yet made concessions that amounted to agreement when he said, "Conscience will always decide right, *if the case is fairly put, and old habits have not obscured its vision:*" two tremendous *ifs*.

April 19th, as if to celebrate that historic day,

he again visits Dr. Channing. Strauss's "Life of Jesus" is talked over. "He observed very archly that he should not be *very* sorry if some of Kneeland's followers would do it into the English. He would advise me not to do it." This wisdom of the serpent on Dr. Channing's part was not characteristic, nor his saying that "Jesus had a miraculous character, different in *kind* from ours." This does not agree with his characteristic doctrine that all minds are of one family, nor with "a sermon of uncommon power but doubtful utility," in the opinion of his colleague, Dr. Gannett, which he preached January 5, 1840. It was "in defense and illustration of the doctrine that the glory of Christianity consists not in anything peculiar to itself, but in what it has in common with the teachings 'of reason and nature.'" "Even the character of Christ and the character of God, Dr. Channing thought, were excellent and glorious rather for what they had in common with other good beings than for any attribute which they alone possessed." Dr. Gannett thought the sermon "suited to do more harm than good." May 2d Parker sees Dr. Channing again, and borrows "Origen." Dr. Channing speaks approvingly of Luther's liberal construction of the Sabbath and says the people should be told such things. In July we have the following comment: —

> If Dr. Channing could be ground over again and come out a young man of five and twenty, — give all the results of his reading, experience, and life, all the

insight, power, eloquence, Christianity, he now possesses, but let him hold the same religious, philosophical, political, and social opinions as now, and let him preach on them as he does, and let him with such tracts as his "Letter on Slavery," etc., be all unknown to fame, and he could not find a place for the sole of his foot in Boston, though half a dozen pulpits were vacant — not he.

Meantime and steadily the reading went on in many languages and the study of innumerable books upon so many different lines that intellectual confusion would have been inevitable for a less coördinative mind. Even for his, there must have been, from first to last, great heaps of incongruous materials littering its spacious rooms. Omniscience, which Sydney Smith called Macaulay's foible, was with Parker the most enviable attribute of God. Knowledge of all kinds had for him an irresistible attraction. It was like the sheet let down to Peter by the four corners out of heaven. It had for him nothing common or unclean. The revision of the De Wette "Introduction" was always in the foreground of his studies. In the middle distance were Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Laplace, Leibnitz, Abelard, Averroës, Baur, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Hesiod, commented on minutely, Plato, always within reach. Here is a jumble of names that might be indefinitely enlarged by the addition of less familiar ones of German scholars who have "had their day and ceased to be." Lowell satirized in the "Fable for Crit-

ics," through ten or twelve lines of incongruous proper names, Parker's habit of personal mention in his sermons, concluding: —

> You may add for yourselves, for I find it a bore,
> All the names you have ever, or not, heard before,
> And when you 've done that, why, invent a few more.

The satire on the sermons was very broad indeed; the exaggeration wild; but without exaggeration or invention a list of the books to which Parker attended during any year of his West Roxbury or Boston ministry would be hardly less chaotic than Lowell's catalogue; especially if, beyond the middle distance, we should study the background of his mind. There poets of all kinds made perpetual holiday. He was so merry over one of these that the workmen in the garden thought he had gone daft. He surrenders unconditionally to Goethe's "Theory of Colors," — finding, no doubt, a place for repentance before long, — and to his Lyrics; but Goethe the man repels him violently: "He is an artist; not a man. . . . There is no warm beat out from his heart." Parker's mind reacted vividly on everything he read, and the most unpromising book was pretty sure to yield him a few grains of thought.

Despite the proverb of the prophet without honor, there came to Parker, in 1840, an invitation to the Lexington pulpit. He was very grateful for it and profoundly touched by it; it delighted him; but he thought his Roxbury people would lose more by his leaving them than he should gain,

and so refused "the good old people of the good old town" in which he had grown up. Besides, he was going to do more henceforth through the press than the pulpit. He had fifty hours a week to spare (!) for work not directly connected with his preaching or parish. But except as the press extended the influence of his pulpit work this dream was never realized to any considerable extent.

because of his devoted life and "bitter cross." The Socinians followed the English habit of thought as represented by Priestley and Lindsey and Belsham, the English Arians being few — the most notable of the earlier, Milton, and Locke, and Samuel Clarke, and of the later Richard Price, who was Benjamin Franklin's valued friend, introducing him to Priestley, and, by his public advocacy of the French Revolution, arousing Burke to those "Reflexions" which reflect a brilliant and yet doubtful honor on the writer's name.

The Socinians were devoutly Biblical, and studying hard to find out what the Bible *taught* they made some approximation to a better understanding of what it actually *is*. Their tentative criticism excited painful apprehensions in the more conservative Unitarian mind. Norton, the impassioned leader of the supernaturalists in 1839, was so far disapproved by Channing in 1819 as one of "the imprudents" that he opposed his elevation to the Dexter Professorship in Harvard College. And yet, as time went on, Channing's large and open soul was much more prophetic of important changes than Norton's critical temper. He was not, in truth, so representative a Unitarian in his own time as he has come to be in the affectionate regard of later Unitarians. No one has developed this fact so clearly as O. B. Frothingham in his "Boston Unitarianism." Indeed, he goes so far as to represent his typical Boston Unitarians — rationalistic, compromising, suave, urbane, literary, ele-

great local eloquence, unsurpassed even by the best — as the wits said Emerson, Channing and Parker for thirteen hours to be regarded as varieties of the same species.

The truth would seem to be that Mr. Frothingham's Boston lectures, like Boston Unitarianism itself, expressed the essential quality of the Unitarian movement from 1820 to 1850 almost as well as Emerson and the other luminaries expressed the essential quality of the Transcendental Movement. They are one more indication of Boston Unitarianism's beyond the range of Channing's profound spirituality and Parker's sturdy theological and political polemics. Dr. Bancroft's soul was out of their ecumenicity, nor had he genius — enthusiastic, engrossing, militant — large enough to express the genial talent of Dorr Island, nevertheless Abbot Pomposo and Nathaniel Hall were agents of American culture; and Dr. Francis of another kind. Monument Beach Unitarianism did not outlast the Unitarian type. There were Unitarians in the next living years — Bellows, Waterston, Ware, Hedge, Briggs, Peabody, Putnam, Parker, and the Mayos, Samuel and S. J., and Emerson, of particular individualism. All these Unitarian worthies, with many others, were faithful to the evolutionary type. But it is also true that, without exception, they exhibited a different temper, intellectual and moral, from that of these Boston Unitarian saints. Mr. Frothingham has interpreted with more generous sympathy because Dr. Nathaniel L. Frothi-

ingham, his father, was one of the most engaging of their coterie.

There were men before Parker, as before Agamemnon, and there were events and persons leading on by natural and inevitable gradation to the crisis of which Parker was the efficient cause. Channing, whose conscious allegiance to the principle of free inquiry was perfect and entire, lived and died believing that this principle was thoroughly consistent with his apprehension of Jesus as a supernatural person and the Bible as a supernatural book. His belief was that of the majority of Unitarians, well-nigh of all, in 1830. Using their reason in the freest manner possible, as it seemed to them, they found the Bible, Jesus, Christianity, all supernatural. The teachings of this religion, this person, this book, they found entirely reasonable. The confidence with which this position was maintained accounts for much of the vigor and boldness with which the right of free inquiry was insisted on by many Unitarian preachers. If they had had the least suspicion that it would some day invalidate the supernatural record and impugn the supernatural person, they would have been less bold. They were not all so bold as Channing, who said, "The truth is, and it ought not to be disguised, that our ultimate reliance is and must be upon reason;" and again, "If after a deliberate and impartial use of our best faculties, a professed revelation seems to us plainly to disagree with itself or clash with great principles

which we cannot question, we ought not to hesitate in withholding from it our belief. I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is the expression of his will." Here was a Magna Charta which Parker's ultimate career wrote large and ran out into various particulars. Channing would have issued it as unreservedly if he had foreseen all that we now see. But he did not foresee all this. There were others who contended that, when reason and conscience clash with revelation, unconditional surrender is men's bounden duty. The younger Ware had taught young men after this fashion from his Harvard chair.

Of coming events that were to make a painful schism in the Unitarian body one of the first shadowy intimations was Emerson's inability to administer "the Lord's Supper" in a sincere and satisfactory manner and his consequent withdrawal from the pulpit of the Second (Hanover Street) Church. In 1836 his "Nature" was a more positive event, and a more fruitful seed. Of all those to whom in America the message of Carlyle was as a voice from heaven, Emerson heard it with the most serene and perfect joy. It helped him towards distinct self-consciousness and self-expression. Here was another prophet, wider and farther seeing than Carlyle, of the immanent and present God, the divinity of nature, the unending genesis and abiding revelation, a continuator of Channing's "one sublime idea" of the greatness of the human soul. His declaration that "the

soul knows no persons" was the affirmation of a truth which even the more liberal are slow to learn; namely, that the great ethical and spiritual laws transcend all personal illustrations and make it an impiety to assign to any individual a unique relation to their infinity, even as the breadth and depth and height of universal life and mystery and law make it, for the instructed mind, but little less than blasphemy to identify a historic person, of whatever excellence, with the Eternal God, or even to predicate of such a person a wholly exceptional relation to him who is over all, God, blessed forever.

In the same year with Emerson's "Nature" appeared Furness's "Remarks on the Four Gospels." He was then in the eleventh year of that Philadelphia pastorate which, active and honorary, covered more than seventy years. He was a new humanitarian, differing widely from the Socinian type. The most significant part of his work was that which steepened the incline down which Unitarian thought was sliding from a supernaturalist to a purely naturalist account of Christianity. For him and his followers the New Testament miracles ceased, as purely natural events, to be evidences for a supernatural Christianity as completely as if all reality whatsoever were denied to them. Moreover his word "natural" reacted on men's thought: meaning, with him, naïve, unconscious, it got his hearers used to thinking of the natural as the historical and made it easier for

them to adopt the scientific meaning of the word, which is "habitual." It is simply as not habitual that the New Testament miracles do not approve themselves to the scientific mind.

There were many European currents that converged upon New England thought about this time. Carlyle's total manner of thinking was one of the most potent of all these, his "Sartor Resartus" its most forcible expression, the chapter on "Natural Supernaturalism" in that tumultuous rhapsody the most significant particular. Here was the glad perception that the miracles of violated law were cheap compared with those of its abiding faithfulness. The influence of Coleridge, also, was very great, but, fortunately for Unitarian clearness, did not impress some of its particular ideas on the Unitarian theology, and especially its antithesis of natural and supernatural religion, the former meaning a religion of sensational (experiential) origin, and the latter a religion of intuitional origin. Had Parker accepted this nomenclature he would have been — not even Bushnell excepted — the most ardent supernaturalist of his time. He left it for Bushnell to take up, and it has been very common in our theological history; very useful and convenient for those desiring to get all the salvage possible from the wreck of their traditional belief. It was from Coleridge, or rather *through* Coleridge, that the distinction of "reason" and "understanding" came into New England thought, and this distinction Parker used with cordial and emphatic

iteration. It was one of Coleridge's best-known appropriations from the German schools; and his best contribution to the New England ferment was his introduction of young men to those schools, and a spring-like warmth of thought which made fluid many things which had been hard and fixed, but which, once set loose, could not all run again into the channels of the traditional belief.

It is altogether probable that in the thirties the influence of Germany was mainly through Coleridge and Carlyle, but they incited men to seek the fountain head. So did Edward Everett as early as 1820 and George Bancroft a few years later, but it was in Frederic Henry Hedge, who went to Germany in Bancroft's charge in 1818, and remained there studying the language and literature of the country for five years, that the first-hand knowledge of German thought reached its high tide in the Transcendental period. James Freeman Clarke was another Germanist, and his translation of De Wette's "Theodore, or The Skeptic's Conversion" was noted by Dr. Joseph Henry Allen as the first book he remembered showing "clear traces of German influence on critical opinion," though it was not published until 1841. Ripley came into possession of a small library of German books, through the death of a young student, and read them carefully and to good purpose when he took upon himself the defense of German theology against the aspersions of Mr. Norton's "Latest Form of Infidelity." But it was Jouffroy's "Eth-

ics" that he chose to translate in 1838, and, in general, such French Eclectics as Constant and Jouffroy and Cousin were more attractive than the Germans with their more abstruse, and, doubtless, more profound philosophy.

The year 1835 was truly a wonderful year for Biblical criticism. It saw the publication of Strauss's "Life of Jesus" and Baur's "Pastoral Epistles" and Vatke's "Religion of the Old Testament," three of the most significant books that have ever seen the light: Baur's initiating his *tendency* theory of New Testament explication, relating everything to the Petro-Pauline controversy; Vatke furnishing the germ of Kuenen's revolutionary doctrine of the late origin of the Priestly part of Hexateuch; Strauss rescuing criticism from the blind alley in which it had been wandering and clearing the way for a scientific method. We hear of his book as being dead and buried: buried? — yes, very much as a bombshell under the ruins of a building it has successfully blown up. The first copy of Strauss is said to have been brought to America in 1836 or '37 by Rev. Henry A. Walker, a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School in the class of '33 with Freeman Clarke, W. H. Channing, and Samuel May of Leicester, a generous rival of his cousin's (S. J.) anti-slavery fame. Mr. Walker, who had been studying in Germany, lent the book to Parker, who wrote a review of it for the "Examiner" in 1840, in which his praise and blame were not rightly divided, the latter being in the

ascendant. Heretofore the most significant piece of American criticism had been Dr. Noyes's "Examiner" article reviewing Hengstenberg in 1834. He said frankly, "It is difficult to point out any prophecies which have been fulfilled in Jesus," and barely escaped a prosecution for blasphemy for his frankness. He was, as we have seen, Parker's first teacher in the Lexington district school, — as such Parker sent him a copy of his De Wette's "Introduction," — and he was one of Parker's first teachers in the school of critical sincerity.

That it might be fulfilled as it is written, "One fig tree looking on another fig tree becometh fruitful," the men impressed and agitated by these various impulses of criticism and philosophy found it necessary to come together and compare notes and mutually correct and stimulate each other. Hence "The Transcendental Club," as it was nicknamed by outsiders; called by Mr. Alcott "The Symposium Club," and by its members, generally, "The Hedge Club," because its meetings were held to suit Mr. Hedge's convenience, when the indifference of the Boston churches had driven him to Bangor, Me., where he found many people of exceptional intelligence and character, and ample quietness in which to nurse his secret growth. The Club, however named, has had no written history as yet so good as Colonel Higginson's, in his "Margaret Fuller Ossoli," and his account of the different personal elements involved in it is too apt to be declined: —

Hedge supplied the trained philosophic mind; Convers Francis, the omnivorous mental appetite; James Freeman Clarke, the philanthropic comprehensiveness; Theodore Parker, the robust energy; Orestes A. Brownson, the gladiatorial vigor; Caleb Stetson, the wit; William Henry Channing, the lofty enthusiasm; Ripley, the active understanding [and the dream of social betterment]; Bartol, the flame of aspiration; Alcott, the pure idealism; Emerson, the *lumen siccum.*

Others came infrequently; Dr. Channing (with George Bancroft) only once. Dr. Channing went often to another Club, called by Parker "The Friends," which met at the rooms of Dr. Channing's high-minded parishioner, Jonathan Phillips. Parker went to this club also several times. Once the theme was Progress, — "This was a Socratic meeting," Dr. Channing the Socrates. "Had the conversation been written out by Plato, it would equal any of his beautiful dialogues." A week later, February 15, 1838, the subject was given by some recent lecture of Emerson's and the discussion was upon the personality of God. Parker agreed with Ripley that Emerson was too pantheistic and that his God was too much of an idea. Ripley's position is interesting in view of his taking up a year later the defense of the German pantheists against Norton's attack on them. The same people turned up at this Club as at the Transcendental, with a margin of difference.

The "Dial," or some such periodical, had been a matter of hope and plan with Margaret Fuller and

Hedge before he went to Bangor. The Club revived the root which had dried up in his absence from Boston. The "Dial" was obviously required to mark the sunny hours of the Club and the progress of the new dawn of intellectual and social aspiration. It is mentioned here only as one more sign of the general ferment of the time. Abner Kneeland's "Investigator" was another, its temper that of Thomas Paine, but more negative than Paine in its theology. (When in 1834 Kneeland was imprisoned for atheism, Dr. Channing had given the measure of his moral courage by heading a petition for his release.) In 1840 Parker's journal contains eight folio pages, closely written, on a certain Groton convention of "Come-outers," which he had attended and addressed. He had walked to the place of meeting — thirty miles — with Ripley and another friend, picking up Cranch at Newton, and Alcott in Concord, where they visited Emerson with much satisfaction, and were admonished by Dr. Ripley from the summit of his years — fourscore and ten — not to be "egomites" — *self-sent.* Parker's own speech was an indictment of sectarianism and a plea for religious unity and for "the Christianity of Christ."

Jesus of Nazareth was the greatest soul ever swathed in the flesh; to redeem man, he took his stand on righteousness and religion; on no form, no tradition, no creed. He demanded not a belief, but a life, — a life of love to God, and love to man. We must come back to this; the sooner the better.

His attitude towards the convention, in which Second Adventists were prominent, and there were cranks with various specifics for making the world go round, was very sympathetic and humane. He was surprised to find so much illiberality among those who had called the convention, so much bondage to the letter of the Bible and to the formalism of the church, but "surprised and enchanted" to find the plain men from Cape Cod making actual his own ideas. He felt strengthened by their example. Only there must be intellectual culture with the progressive spirit.

From the chaotic elements that were surging in New England as Parker neared the threshold of his thirtieth year, one event emerges, as I saw Mt. Tacoma, after many days of cloud and rain, a pure white wonder shaping itself against the morning sky. I speak of Emerson's Divinity School Address of July 15, 1838, which was delivered in the little chapel of Divinity Hall to the class graduating that year. It was one of the three most memorable addresses known to the Unitarian annalist in the history of his sect. An earlier one was Channing's Baltimore sermon of 1819; a later, Parker's of 1841, to which all the preparation of this chapter tends. Bellows's "Suspense of Faith" in 1859 and Hedge's "Anti-Supernaturalism in the Pulpit" in 1864 were significant, and made much noise, but they were both backward-looking and both ephemeral as compared with either of the three just named. When Emerson's address

was given, Parker was on hand. It must have been late when he got back to Roxbury that night, but he did not go to bed till he had written this in his journal: —

> . . . He surpassed himself as much as he surpasses others in the general way. . . . So beautiful, so just, so true, and terribly sublime was his picture of the faults of the church in its present position. My soul is roused, and this week I shall write the long-meditated sermons on the state of the church and the duties of these times.

There were two other sermons which presently came out of the drawer where for some months they had been biding their time. They dealt with the Bible, the inconsistencies and contradictions of its various parts. Especially for one so impetuous, Parker's self-control and patience were remarkable. He had advanced a little in his thinking at Cambridge; a good deal it seemed to him. He had kept on since his graduation. But there was no sign of haste in his conclusions. When, in 1838, he reviewed Dr. Palfrey's "Jewish Antiquities," the doctor's disposition to minimize the miracles of the Old Testament, while still believing in their necessary sanction, seemed to him very strange. He sought help from all quarters. He trudged all the way to Andover to talk with Professor Moses Stuart, and found him in agreement with Channing as to the superiority of reason to revelation as a last resort. He visited Professor Norton at Cambridge, and was "delighted to see so profound and

accurate a scholar." A year after Emerson's great address, Professor Norton made his famous reply to it, "The Latest Form of Infidelity." It was a deliberate utterance. He had been brooding over it during the interim between Emerson's address and his own opportunity, July 19, 1839. Several months in advance of Emerson's address he was in a state of mind that required some more elaborate expression than his correspondence and his personal intercourse afforded him. I have his autograph letter of February 12, 1838, to Dr. Noyes, advising him in regard to a lecture upon Episcopal ordination which Dr. Noyes was about to write. It passes from its immediate occasion to denominational matters: —

> The community begin to feel that a clergyman who merely preaches two dull or mischievous sermons a week, and goes through the ordinary routine of his office, is not a very important member of society. Especially if men get the impression which some of the clergy and candidates in this neighborhood are likely to give, that their superior wisdom consists in rejecting all common belief in Christianity and in God, that they look upon this only as a popular manifestation of the religious principle to which they are willing to accommodate their language for the sake of those who cannot rise to any higher degree of spirituality, then the last blow to the credit and even existence of the clergy will have been given. No clergy will be supported among us to teach transcendentalism, infidelity, and pantheism.

Within the year following Emerson's address the alumni of the Divinity School had formed an

association, apparently with a view to furnishing successive counterblasts to such utterances as the graduating classes might invite, seeing that one of its first acts was to establish an annual lectureship and elect Mr. Norton as the first lecturer. His warning trumpet gave no uncertain sound: —

> The latest form of infidelity is distinguished by assuming the Christian name, while it strikes directly at the root of faith in Christianity, and indirectly of all religion, by denying the miracles attesting the divine mission of Christ.

There was some adverse criticism of German philosophers and theologians, but the main business of the address was to charge dishonesty on those who did not reject the Christian name when they could no longer accept the truths of Christianity on account of the New Testament miracles. The situation was a vivid reproduction of that which existed twenty years before, when the Calvinists denied the Christian name to all who were not Calvinists. It was more irrational and less ethical than that, because the Calvinists of 1819 believed great truths to be in danger, — the Trinity, the Atonement, the Deity of Christ, — while Mr. Norton and his friends had only to object that their great truths were not believed for their own particular reasons, — the New Testament miracles, — that it might be fulfilled as it was written in the New Testament, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." It cannot be too clearly understood that the gravamen of Mr.

Norton's charge was not the denial of miracle, but the denial of its indispensable evidential quality: "the only satisfactory proof."

By a belief in Christianity we mean the belief that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion; and that the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak to us in his name was attested, in the only mode in which it could be, by miraculous displays of his power.

Here was distinctly lower ground than that taken by Jonathan Edwards, of whom Dr. A. V. G. Allen writes: —

Edwards had risen above the necessity of attaching supreme importance to miracle as the highest evidence of God's activity in the world. In plain truth, he takes little or no interest in miracles. He makes them hold a subordinate place, as compared with the internal evidences of the truth of Christ's religion. . . . The historical testimony of miracles must be weighed by those who have the necessary learning or leisure. But the divine light may come to children and to weak women, bringing with it its own evidence of divinity.

Here is good evidence for the validity of the claim which has been made for Edwards as a Transcendentalist before Emerson.[1]

[1] The Transcendentalism of Emerson and Parker had been anticipated by Calvin also, in comparison with whose doctrine that of Mr. Norton is surprisingly unspiritual and mechanical. Calvin wrote: "Holy Scripture has means of making itself known, exciting a feeling just as clear and infallible as when black and white things make evident their color, or the sweet and bitter things their taste."

The most notable reply to Mr. Norton's address was furnished by George Ripley, then the pastor of the Purchase Street Unitarian Society in Boston. It was in three parts, dated September and December, 1839, and February, 1840. The second and third parts were in reply to Mr. Norton's defense of his address against Mr. Ripley's attack. The first part was the most effective, because dealing closely with the main question: Are miracles the sole ground for belief in Christianity? and the subsidiary one: Could no one be a Christian who accepted the truths of Christianity for their own sake without any miraculous compulsion? Mr. Norton's steel-cold intelligence made it a more difficult matter for Mr. Ripley to make out a case for Schleiermacher and other Germans as believers in a personal God and immortality. Parker wrote of Ripley's first pamphlet in advance: —

> He will not say all I wish might be said; but, after we have seen that, I will handle, in a letter to you, certain other points not approached by Ripley. There is a higher word to be said on this subject than Ripley is disposed to say just now.

He said the higher word to the best of his ability in an anonymous pamphlet: "The Previous Question between Mr. Andrews Norton and his Alumni moved and handled in a Letter to all those Gentlemen by Levi Blodgett." All that was most significant in the South Boston sermon was present in this pamphlet of the previous year. The Tran-

scendentalism was full-blown; there was passionate regret that men should believe the great spiritual truths of religion on such physical grounds as miracles supply, while at the same time he said, "I believe that Jesus, like other religious teachers, wrought miracles." Ripley had made a similar avowal in one of his letters to Mr. Norton. It is therefore perfectly plain that the standard around which the battle raged was not, "Did miracles happen?" but, "Are they the sole or best reason for accepting the truths of Christianity?" The unpardonable sin was belief in Christianity upon the ground of its intrinsic excellence, its "eternal beauty, so ancient and yet so new." The subject was debated at the Berry Street Conference[1] in 1840: "Ought differences of opinion on the value and authority of miracles to exclude men from Christian fellowship and sympathy with one another." This sounds as if the liberals had had the shaping of the question. It was asked if it was proper for men differing about the miracles to exchange pulpits. Ripley, Stetson, and Hedge made good liberal speeches. Parker said nothing, for fear that he might say too much. He went home resolving that he would let out all the force of Transcendentalism there was in him. His consciousness of real power was growing every day,

[1] This Conference, which met annually in May, was so called because it met in a room of Dr. Channing's Federal Street church which opened on Berry Street. It still keeps the old name though now meeting in the Arlington Street church. The membership is exclusively ministerial.

and he was entertaining schemes of work sufficient for the longest life: —

> I have a work to do and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. . . . I must write an Introduction to the New Testament — must show that Christianity is its universal and distinctive part. I must write a Philosophy of Man, and show the foundation of religion in him. . . . But much hard work must be done before I can approach the *Introduction*. This I am now preparing for. Still harder work before the *Philosophy* can come forth, and much more before the crown of *Theology* can be put on the work. Here is work for digging, for flying, and for resting, still yielding to the currents of universal being that set through a soul that is pure.

Meantime, the Levi Blodgett pamphlet, and rumors of his more theological sermons, and the passing round of certain of his franker private utterances, were marking him for "a sign that should be spoken against," a man under suspicion of heresy. The South Boston sermon, when it came, bore evidence that he was smarting from the stings of brotherly distrust. There was a distinctly personal note, as where he said, "Already men of the same sect eye one another with suspicion and lowering brows that indicate a storm, and, like children who have fallen out in their play, call hard names." There was also the thin end of what would ultimately prove the thickest and most divisive wedge between him and his ministerial brethren: "Alas for that man who consents to

think one thing in his closet and preach another in his pulpit." This was a sorrow in no way peculiar to Theodore Parker. It is shared in some measure by every man of every sect who tries to shape his public utterance as closely as may be upon his private thought.

In January, 1842, he preached the Thursday lecture; his subject "Inspiration." (He had just published a noble article in the "Examiner" on Cudworth's "Intellectual System of the Universe," a book much read in Transcendental circles.) After the lecture some excellent divine interrupted his talk with Dr. Francis, to say, "When you write about Ralph Cudworth I like you; but when you talk about Jesus Christ I can't bear you." There may have been a real grievance here, for Parker sometimes passed too easily from the general faith in progress to the conviction that the great individuals of the past would be excelled. They may be, but his own doctrine did not require it, nor does any sound doctrine of progress. Later in the year (1842) he writes in the journal that he has repeatedly solicited an exchange with this, that and the other minister, but in vain. He will try others "for the experiment's sake." But he would laugh outright to find himself weeping because the Boston clergy would not exchange with him. The event did not make good this cheerful prophecy. The laugh was hollow, but the tears were real enough, for he was a tender-hearted man.

On May 19, 1841, "a new day" as Parker

afterward set down, there was an ordination and installation in the South Boston Unitarian Church. The candidate was Charles C. Shackford, who afterward preaching at Lynn, Mass., and teaching in Cornell University, made good the hope expressed in Parker's ordination sermon that he would give "the freshness of his early inspiration" to his lifelong work. The title of the sermon, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," was, I think, suggested by the title of some recent essay by "young Mr. Strauss," as Parker designates him. Parker was feeling dull when he wrote it, and he was ill satisfied with it; while a candid friend (Ripley?) pronounced it the poorest thing he had ever done; which it certainly was not. If it was loose in structure, it was not exceptional among his sermons in that respect, nor in its redundancy. It had more of the organic unity of his earlier sermons than of the formal coherency of the later ones. There were some lapses of taste — never his strongest point; there was here and there a purple patch of rhetoric. It is easy to agree with Mr. Frothingham that as a work of art it is not to be compared with "Emerson's exquisite chant" three years before; but the rest of his sentence is equally true: "as a manifesto it was vastly more significant." What that sang so sweetly in the willing ears that were attuned to such elusive melody, this proclaimed as from the housetops, and as with a trumpet's voice. Channing had said the same thing in his own quiet

way, and Dr. Gannett, as we have seen, had made adverse note of it, but the casual expression had not had its due effect. Ripley had preached many times, and even at one installation, a sermon, "Jesus Christ the same Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," the positive side of which coincided exactly with the positive side of Parker's "Transient and Permanent," but, while the negative implication was the same, it was too faintly adumbrated to startle any one enjoying quiet sleep.

Parker's sermon — a warm, rich, full, and glowing utterance of what had now for some time been gathering volume and momentum in his mind and heart — dwelt with rhetorical vehemence on the permanence of Christianity as embodied in the teachings of Jesus: —

> That pure ideal religion which Jesus saw on the mount of his vision, and lived out in the lowly life of a Galilean peasant; which transforms his cross into an emblem of all that is holiest on earth; which makes sacred the ground he trod, and is dearest to the best of men, most true to what is truest in them — cannot pass away. Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of religion and love, they can never outgo the flight of truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly towards a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory.

This theme recurs many times throughout the sermon in various forms, but never with uncertain

stress. Modern orthodoxy might go to this sermon for more eloquent expression of its confidence in the permanent influence of Jesus than its own preachers often frame, while few modern Unitarians, even the most conservative, would be able to qualify Jesus and Christianity in terms so generous as these, and every negative conclusion has long since become a commonplace with them, the parts touching the Bible equally so with orthodox scholars, and laymen who are well informed. It is difficult to reconstruct the Unitarian mind that was so shocked and terrified by this enthusiastic affirmation of the permanence of essential Christianity and the greatness of the spiritual in man. It was, in fact, certain incidental expressions that gave the most offense. Jesus was said to have founded no institutions; for the miraculous authorship of the Bible there was "no shadow of evidence." But, probably, the most offensive utterance was this: "If it could be proved that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still Christianity would stand firm and fear no evil." Long before his death Mr. Beecher could say this to his Brooklyn congregation and not one incredulous eyebrow stir. Parker followed it with words that were a serious qualification: "But we should lose — oh, irreparable loss! — the example of that character, so beautiful, so divine, that no human genius could have conceived it." At the same time the pure humanity of Jesus was not disguised: "Measure him by the world's greatest sons — how poor they

are! Try him by the best of men — how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet, perhaps, come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother, the son of man, as we are; the Son of God, like ourselves?" In a single passage, and quite unrelatedly, the ideal Christ "whom we form in our hearts" is held superior to the historic Christ, "so blameless and so beautiful." In general there is a complete identification of the teachings of Jesus with absolute religion. These "can no more perish than the stars he wiped out of the sky. The truths he taught; his doctrines respecting man and God; the relation between man and man, and man and God, with the duties that grow out of that relation — are always the same, and can never change till man ceases to be man, and creation vanishes into nothing." Christianity he said "is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion." The name would be as imperishable as the thing. "Given in mockery, it will last till the world go down."

There was much here that was not carefully considered; much that Parker would himself revise as time went on, and he came to see that Jesus published doctrines and precepts that he (Parker) could not accept as practicable or true. There was an unwarranted depreciation of humanity in his idea that Christianity had contracted "nothing but stain" from its historical environment; an implicit denial of God's perpetual immanence and operation. Even the central thought — that the

value of Christianity is to be sought in its abstraction of those elements that are common to all religions — is one that will not bear examination. So measured, every religion would be as absolute as Christianity, the lowest equally with the highest. At its best, however, Parker's Absolute Religion was not a thin abstraction, but a concrete reality, to which the ethnic and other religions approximated in various degrees. The general opinion that the sermon was from start to finish an attack on Christianity as a supernatural religion is without any warrant in the sermon itself. A more positive utterance never fell from human lips. So much as was negative was purely incidental. Apparently Parker had not yet finally parted with the miracles as actual occurrences, though he may have come to regard them, with Dr. Furness, as natural events. But the drift of the sermon was that, if supernatural, they were no longer essential to the support of Christianity, whatever may have been their original efficacy. The grand contention of the sermon was that Christianity, as the absolute religion, shines by its own light, is its own evidence, needs no miraculous support. It was unmistakably a flat and fearless contradiction of Mr. Andrews Norton's "Latest Form of Infidelity." There the contention was that no man is a Christian who does not believe in the Christian truth because of some miraculous attestation. Parker's denial was implicit. Mr. Norton's doctrine was excluded by a larger affirmation. The

miracles were barely mentioned in Parker's sermon, but the implication was unmistakable that to believe in Christian truth only as miraculously attested was to do it great irreverence. That he considered miraculous attestation of it as unnecessary as of the brightness of the noonday sun or "the breathing beauty of the world" was also very plain. And strange as it may seem, it was this spontaneous, free, and joyous acceptance of Jesus and Christianity for their intrinsic excellence, and that alone, that was the unpardonable sin of the South Boston sermon in many alienated and some friendly eyes.

## CHAPTER V

### WORK, STRIFE, AND REST

THE South Boston sermon does not seem to have awakened any immediate tumult of disclaim on the part of those Unitarian ministers who assisted Parker at the ordination or sat as listeners in the pews.[1] It is remembered that somebody went out during the sermon, but, as Weiss suggests, that may have been because the ventilation of the church was unsatisfactory: not because Mr. Parker was ventilating novel opinions but too well. It would appear that the first to take alarm, after some orthodox warning, were those who agreed substantially with the preacher, but were not prepared to give their esoteric views an exoteric application. It was not long, however, before a considerable pack of heresy hunters was in full cry.[2]

[1] The first formal protest came from orthodox ministers who were present, one demanding his arrest for blasphemy. A Unitarian layman wrote in the Boston *Courier*, "I would rather see every Unitarian congregation in our land dissolved and every one of our churches occupied by other denominations or razed to the ground than to assist in placing a man entertaining the sentiments of Theodore Parker in one of our pulpits."

[2] In his *Reminiscences*, p. 199, Dr. S. K. Lothrop claims, "I was among the first of Unitarian clergymen, publicly over my own name, to put myself in opposition to Mr. Parker's rationalism, and insist that it was not Christian ground."

Orthodox preachers and journals were, of course, delighted with a turn of affairs which exposed the Unitarian flank to their assault and enabled them to ask "What did we tell you?"—a question never asked without great self-satisfaction. Had they not prophesied that Unitarianism would go on from bad to worse? The "Christian Register" and "Christian Examiner," the Unitarian weekly and quarterly, evidenced a generous spirit, and yet many bitter things were said. The secular papers could not be expected to forego so good an opportunity, and they improved it with that infallibility which is generally accorded them, even where it is not assumed. Their harsher judgments were emphasized mostly by a few who had much or little to lose by standing upon Parker's side, some of them [illegible] away the morning in a manner more creditable to their hearts than to their heads. The tone of the highly respectable Unitarian lecturers, such as Mr. Frothingham describes so aptly in his "Boston Unitarianism," were naturally excited, and the impact of their hostility on the local clergy made itself felt. Exchanges for which Parker had arranged were cancelled and those solicited were refused, until he could count the remainder on his fingers without counting any finger twice. From this list as it stands in his journal for December 23, 1842, [illegible] several [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] names.

"Like gold [illegible] it [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] as" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]: [illegible], [illegible], [illegible]

pont, Sargent, Samuel Robbins, Stetson, Shackford, and (later) Freeman Clarke. Some of these meant more to him because the adhesion was in spite of difference as to the worth or wisdom of the obnoxious sermon; and quite as precious was the kindness of others who could not conscientiously ally themselves with such a dangerous heretic as they considered him to be. The personal kindness of some of these men could not have been more lovely than it was. To do as they were constrained to hurt them quite as much as it did him. He appreciated their position and the goodness of their hearts. To people made of sterner stuff it may appear that he made a great ado about nothing, — the loss here and there of formal fellowship. In many cases he lost more than this from "greetings where no kindness was," but studious neglect. Sometimes he made fun of the situation in his journal, as after a visit to Mr. Norton, but this salve was not sufficient for the wound. He lived so much in his affections that a thrust which would have been a pin-prick to another was a stab to him.

He expected the general hurly-burly to stir up opposition against him in his West Roxbury parish, but there it did no appreciable harm. A good deacon was n't sure about some things, but he was very sure of *him:* he preached the central verities, and there was nothing the matter with his life. Farmers with whom he had sat on the barn floor, helping them shell their beans, who had helped

him in his ploughing and planting, and women whose children he had hugged and kissed with human, not parochial, admiration, were not going to turn against him because he said right out what he thought about the Bible and the church and the popular theology. Then, too, the leading spirits in his society were forward-looking men and women, appreciating the fact that their young minister was no average man, but one of very great ability, with a prophetic soul. They found his name, Theodore, significant of what he was to them.

Another consolation was the burden under which he grew from day to day, — the work of his ministry, that on the De Wette "Introduction," and, in the winter of 1841–42, that involved in the preparation of a series of lectures which, in the spring of 1842, rounded into the book, "A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion." The invitation to give the lectures he at first refused, but it was so earnest and sincere that he repented of his refusal and consented to make the attempt. They were delivered in the old Masonic Temple, not a place suggesting the exposure of "the mystery of godliness" to the clearest light, yet answering well enough but for the contracted space, crowded by those who came to hear the heretic who had been advertised so well by those who had called him "blasphemer," "infidel," and "atheist." With those who dearly loved the crash of broken idols came ingenuous youths and older

people hungering for some better bread than could be made of the wheat grown on the worn-out soil of the traditional theology. To many of his hearers he must have seemed to offer in himself convincing argument that what he taught could not be true, so evidently was there here, for them, another "man from heaven," speaking in supernatural tones.

The book which gathered up the lectures, somewhat enlarged, and with a wealth of learned notes contrasting curiously with the simplicity of the principal matter, was the best book that Parker ever made. Though in Miss Cobbe's edition there are fourteen volumes of his works, and these do not include "De Wette," he published in his lifetime but three real books, with some half dozen volumes of "Critical and Miscellaneous Writings" and "Speeches and Addresses," with a story, "Two Christmas Celebrations," and his "Trial and Defence." The real books were the "Discourse," "Ten Sermons of Religion," and "Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology;" and the greatest of these was the "Discourse." The "Ten Sermons" has enjoyed more popular esteem; but it is less vivid and spontaneous; it is oftener disfigured by the controversial note; and this is yet truer of the "Sermons of Theism," which is a hard and gritty book in comparison with either of the others. Of the "Discourse" Parker wrote in his journal, May 6, 1842:—

I have worked on my "Discourse" from fifty to eighty hours a week for several weeks. To-day I received the last proof-sheet, p. 504 and the pp. viii of Preface, etc. It fills me with sadness to end what has been so dear to me. Well, the result lies with God. May it do a good work! I fear not, but hope. There may be a *noise* about it; it will not surprise me. But I think it will do a good work for the world. God bless the good in it, and destroy the bad! This is my prayer.

The anticipations and the hopes so piously recorded have had various realization and defeat. There was abundant noise about it. It has done a good work for many, but not the work which should have been done by a book which is one of the most religious that has ever issued from a human soul. The nipping air of theological controversy killed in the blossom much of its proper fruit, and because some of the knowledge in it has vanished away, it has been too hastily inferred that its unfailing love has suffered in like manner and degree.

Howsoever time has used it, it remains a book of prophecy and psalm. What is true of his whole output is preëminently true of this particular book: "his fragmentary denials were but the floating drift upon the deep, swift current of his mighty faith."[1] Its glowing tribute to the Bible has been quoted by orthodox preachers, and their hearers have gone home remembering that glorious

[1] Rev. A. D. Mayo.

passage and forgetting all the rest. Never before had the human excellence of Jesus been made so real, so beautiful. But, if I should ever meet a person doubting that Theodore Parker had a genius for religion, I should ask him to read the chapter called "Solid Piety." How it soars and sings! Never shall I forget how all things were made new for me by my first reading of this book in 1857,[1] Parker himself having directed me to it in answer to a letter I had written him. I had never dreamed that the great things of religion could be made so warm and pleasant, so tender and appealing, to my young heart and mind.

There are many stories of the happy influence it had upon unpromising material. When a set of Western roughs resolved to turn out the Yankee schoolmistress, coming upon this book they read it to tatters, and obtained grace thereby to defend her against all comers. Mr. Frothingham tells of a Western judge who put it into the hands of a thoughtless youth who was looking about for a pleasant Sunday time-killer. His experience with religious books had not been agreeable, but "a religious book like that he had never seen. If that was religion he liked it." It made a man of him, useful and benevolent. The judge had finally

[1] A friend has just sent me (March 14, 1899), the book I borrowed from her husband, William B. Brown, of Marblehead, Mass., in 1857, to be henceforth my own. To re-read it in this fine old octavo, wherein the large and open type seconds the thought conveyed, has been a satisfaction bringing many vanished things to mind.

given him the book, because like the Spanish bibliophile who murdered the purchaser of some darling book, the young man could not part with it. Years afterward they met and, in answer to the judge's inquiries, the younger man answered joyfully that he still had the book, now bound in good leather, it having been worn out of its first covers with much reading and lending. Had Parker known of this he might have said, as Dr. Channing, when some wage-earner wrote to him gratefully from Europe, "This is a thousand times better than fame!"

Parker had need of all the kind and grateful words that came to him about the book, so many came to him of another sort. It was the South Boston sermon "writ large." Opening with an account of the philosophy of religion, it first dealt with the psychology of religion as the Sentiment, the Idea, and the Conception of God, and with Fetichism, Polytheism, and Monotheism as successive progressive forms; it next proceeded to questions of God's relation to nature and to man; Miracles and Inspiration here passing in review. Given good courage, and nothing so hurries an advancing column as a brisk fire in front, and Parker arrived at sound conclusions much sooner in the teeth of vigorous opposition than he would otherwise have done. They were, as regards miracles, the conclusions of Huxley forty years in advance of Huxley's formulation. Antecedently to experience, — this was the doctrine, — one thing is as possible as

another; but the more stable our experience of any kind of thing, the more evidence we must demand for anything affronting this experience: so few persons have risen from the dead at any time that the evidence for any particular resurrection should be immense. It is not a little wonderful that Parker, a Transcendentalist after the strictest manner of the sect, should have placed himself with absolute clearness and simplicity on the scientific ground. From then till now Unitarian progress has been along the line illuminated by his beacon light. The great headlands of science, then vague on the horizon, have since loomed up majestic in the morning air. Some indeed have steered by the pleasing fiction which beguiled Parker for a time, that miracle is the illustration of a higher law than that habitually known; but so many have been wrecked upon this course that it is getting advertised as dangerous even on theological charts, and on that of science its name henceforth will be that which Huxley gave it — "pseudo-science."

To continue our account of the "Discourse" — following the parts already named were three of historical and critical theology on Jesus of Nazareth, the Bible, and the Church. Under the first of these heads the question of miracle was resumed for more particular consideration. His favorite aphorism, "Truth for Authority, not Authority for Truth," which Lucretia Mott adopted as her own motto *par excellence* and loved to write upon

her photographs and whenever her autograph was requested, — this was developed at some length. The essential character of Christianity was found, not in its originality but in its being a method of right living and in its emphasis upon a dutiful and loving life. The orderly procedure of the book is evident from the analytical table of contents made by William C. Gannett for Putnam's edition of 1877, a piece of work that would have delighted Parker's sense of careful definition and well-ordered argument. The notes multiply ten and twenty fold the impression of the author's learning given by the body of the book, this also being strong. Some of the keener thrusts at the growing opposition to his teachings are reserved for these; and some of the more remarkable anticipations of the course of critical and theological development since 1842. When Vatke's views are referred to as "valuable but one-sided" he little knew how germinal they were of that reconstruction of the Bible which has been effected by Kuenen and Wellhausen. Yet he anticipated Kuenen's central idea, when he wrote: "The testimony of the prophets respecting the early state of the nation is more valuable than that of the Pentateuch itself." His resolution of the world's earlier religious histories into the three stages, Fetichism, Polytheism, Monotheism, is too delightfully simple to have withstood the shock of Spencer's ghosts and all the totems and what not that have been marshaled by the anthropologists during the last half century. But it is

still roughly true, though by Fetichism we must understand an exceedingly complex variety of early superstitions, often one and the same cult confusing many different and even contradictory forms. In general the wonder is that Parker's learning stands so well the tests of time and tide. That it does so is partly owing to the courage which accepted views far in advance of those generally current in his time; but is more because his sturdy common sense was an Ithuriel spear testing the virtue of innumerable theories that were presented by his reading to his mind, and approving what had in it the best promise of some enduring quality.

Far more astonishing than the learning apparent in and suggested by the notes was, and still is, the freedom of the main body of the book from the infection of their bookishness. There he left his many-colored coat of learning, as Joseph his coat in the story, and escaped into the freedom of a style shaped not on books but on the simplicities of daily life, on loving reminiscences of farm and field, upon the language of his father's honest thought, his mother's homely prayers. The learning was there also, but so transfused into his personal life as to be no one's but his own when it came welling to his lips and streaming from his pen. The most unlearned preacher in Boston or New England was not so gifted in the common speech of men as he.

The book renewed the excitement caused by the South Boston sermon. Martineau has written that

the *suppressed matter* of every religious controversy is the real ground of controversy. So was it here. So fought his opponents, not as one who beateth the air. The ostensible ground of disagreement was whether a man could be a Christian who believed the truths of Christianity for any other reason than because they were approved by signs and wonders. The real ground was much wider than this, or than that which divided Luther from the Pope. It has been fought over many times since 1842. Even as I write these pages comes an article in the "New World," March, 1899, on "The Reconstructed Church," by Rev. Charles F. Dole. Speaking of the distinction between progressive Unitarianism and progressive Orthodoxy, he says, "The distinction is between any form of religion, however refined, which binds the spirits of men to the authority of the past and that religion which believes in the living and present God, incarnate forever in human conscience and love." Now the distinction between Parker and his critics was exactly this; if dimly recognized, yet profoundly felt. It is true that Parker identified Christianity with his Absolute Religion, meaning by this Religion in its essential, universal character. The inexpugnable fact remained that Absolute Religion was his standard of measurement. He accepted Christianity as justified by that and not that as justified by Christianity. The free soul was his ultimate standard, and not any traditional authority vested in Bible, Church, or Christ.

It was, then, no little crevice which divided Parker from the conservative Unitarians of his time. The breach was wide and deep: on the one side a venerable and supernatural Authority; on the other Truth, as the most characteristic product of man's natural intelligence and subject to indefinite variation and development from age to age. Here was a right-about-face as complete as that of the Copernican from the Ptolemaic astronomy. Those who have effected it with unqualified simplicity are still few, though Parker has been dead these forty years. The mark of his high calling is still a fearful one for the majority, and many and ingenious are the devices by which its exigency is disguised, if haply something short of that may seem to answer quite as well.

Ever since the Norton address of 1839 the Boston Association of Unitarian ministers — not to be confounded with the American Unitarian Association, as it has been too often in relation to this business — had from time to time reverted to the question, "Can a believer in Christianity who rejects the miracles or does not believe because of them be considered a Christian?" At the meeting of December 2, 1841, Dr. Parkman had tried to relieve the tension with a joke, saying that he should not care to exchange with "a man who had an unfortunate twist in his face and would make the people laugh, especially in devotion." Later he grew more serious and said, "if one member of the Association entertained and preached opinions

distasteful to the majority of his brethren in the Association it was his duty to withdraw." This line of attack was followed in all the subsequent proceedings. The situation was not unlike that of a meeting of rival Quakers disputing the possession of a meeting-house: No blows were to be struck, but the Hicksites were to be crowded out. Parker declining to commit *hara-kiri*, it was from time to time suggested that the Association should do that, and in its self-destruction whelm the unwelcome heretic; but there were those who thought that such a proceeding might be interpreted in the community as Parker's victory; and these prevailed. A little further on the Thursday lecture did lay violent hands upon itself to prevent him from ever preaching it again.

There was one meeting of the Association which stands out from all others in the history of Parker's difference with his Unitarian brethren. It was held January 23, 1843, and Parker's own account of it covers a dozen closely written foolscap pages of his journal, with the heading, "This to be printed in 1899 as a memorial of the 19th century." But nearly all of it appeared in Weiss's book, — for the names of the different speakers dashes being substituted, — while Mr. Frothingham gave a careful summary. His father, Dr. N. L. Frothingham, presided at the meeting, to which Parker had been specially invited, some previous discussions having been devoted to him and his book in his absence. This the higher-minded did

not like. The chairman denounced the book as "vehemently deistical" and "subversive of Christianity as a particular religion." But the book was not the only stone of stumbling. Another was an article which Parker had written in the "Dial" of October, 1842, upon the Hollis Street Council which had sat upon the trouble between Rev. John Pierpont and his people relative to his preaching against "Rum-making, Rum-selling, and Rum-drinking," and thereby giving some of his most influential parishioners distinct offense. As the article stands in the "Dial" it is preluded by Thoreau's "Rumors from an Æolian Harp." Its own notes are those of a trumpet giving no uncertain sound. The clerical members of the council were charged with base subserviency to the liquor interest and of unfairness to the accused. The result in council was characterized as a "Jesuitical document," an expression which gave much offense. Mr. E. S. Gannett (made "Dr." the next summer) was, as a member of the council, much offended with the article, though he "had not read it carefully," he "disliked it so much." He would freely, and from his heart, forgive Parker, "though he could never take him cordially by the hand again." How characteristic this of Dr. Gannett, who said many things in haste which he repented at leisure, but could no more have been consciously a party to the injustice imputed to the Hollis Street Council by Mr. Parker than Parker himself!

Some things in Pierpont which Parker felt that

he "must censure" are amusing for their naïve unconsciousness of his own manner, so sharp already that Dr. Parkman told him, "You dip your pen in gall and your razor in oil." (This at the meeting of the Association which I shall presently resume.) Parker said of Pierpont, "He allows himself an indignant eloquence which were better let alone; he gives blow for blow and scorn for scorn; he does not speak gently." Such criticisms of the proverbial kettle on the complexion of a fraternal pot were inventions that must have returned to plague the inventor many times as he went his controversial way.

From the Hollis Street Council the discussion at the Association meeting came back to the book, Mr. Gannett saying that miracles and the authority of Christ attested by them must be added to absolute religion to make Christianity. Parker replied that Christianity was love to God and man, and that miracles could not make this more or less important. He had no philosophical objections to miracles as uncommon events, "but only demanded more evidence than for a common event."

Then some one said, that was enough; it was plain I was no Christian, for Christianity was a supernatural and miraculous revelation. To which I said, that it might be but it had not been shown to be such. It seemed preposterous to make miracles the Shibboleth of Christianity. . . . Nobody accused me of preaching less than absolute morality and religion. If they could exist without Christianity what was the use of Chris-

tianity? So I thought it a mistake to make absolute religion one thing and Christianity something different.

Chandler Robbins said, "Since Mr. Parker finds the feeling in respect to him is so general, I think it is his duty to withdraw from the Association." Others spoke to the same purpose. He hurt their usefulness, compromised their position, etc. "I told them that if my personal feelings alone were concerned I would gladly do so, but as *the right of free inquiry* was concerned, *while the world standeth I will never do so.*" Dr. Frothingham said if it was a meeting for free inquiry he should very soon withdraw. He also said, "The difference between Trinitarians and Unitarians is a difference in Christianity; the difference between Mr. Parker and the Association is a difference between no Christianity and Christianity." Mr. Gannett protested that they did not deny that Mr. Parker was a Christian man, but only that his book was a Christian book, denying, as it did, the miracles. There was much more to the same effect.[1] At last Bartol (Cyrus A.) came to the defense of Parker's sincerity, which some had called in ques-

[1] Dr. Dewey, at another meeting, while insisting that the name Christian should be denied to "Rationalists" of Parker's kind, confessed that he preferred Rationalism to Calvinism. To which Dr. George Putnam, one of those who had most grievously disappointed Parker's hopes of personal fidelity, pertinently answered, "Then you would call Christianity what you think further from true Christianity than Rationalism." The differences in which Parker's opponents were involved are very interesting and instructive. They show how hard it was for Unitarians to attain to even an approximate doctrinal uniformity.

tion, and "spoke many words of moral approbation; so, likewise, did Gannett, at length, and with his usual earnestness." Chandler Robbins struck the same note. Whereupon Parker, who had borne the brunt of accusation very well, broke down quite shamefully and left the room in tears. Dr. Frothingham, sincerely kind, if not morally consistent, met him in the entry, shook hands with him, and hoped he would come and see him.

It was a man of thirty-two summers who had to answer for the faith that was in him in this trying manner before the grave and venerable signiors of the church and one "fellow of infinite jest." We shall entirely fail to comprehend the strength of his feelings, and their frequent bitterness, if we do not attend to his persuasion that some, if not many, of his accusers were at heart quite as heretical as he. It may have seemed very strange to him that his acceptance of Christianity for its own sake was less satisfactory to his brethren than his acceptance of it on account of the miracles would have been. That they should refuse him their fellowship on this ground may have seemed yet more strange to him. But what he could not understand at all, and what, as time went on, gave the keen edge of satire to his speech, was the fact that some of his severest critics had long held opinions quite as novel as his own, unqualified by his faith in absolute religion, and in Christianity as identical with that. "The most forward," says Mr. Frothingham, "made most haste to retrace their steps;" and he goes on: —

One gentleman, a doctor of divinity, but a man of letters rather than a theologian, a radical in literature, but a conservative in sentiment and usage, who once had said to him, that if Strauss had written a small book, in a single volume, in a popular style, he would have about done the thing for historical Christianity; who on another occasion, when asked how he reconciled the conflicting accounts in the four Gospels, replied, "I don't try to reconcile them; you can't tell where fact begins or fiction ends, nor whether there is any fact at all at the bottom;" who on yet another occasion, when asked what he thought of Cousin's "Atheism," answered, "I don't know whether he believes in a God or not, but I know that he has the ethical and religious spirit of Christianity, and is a Christian;" who yet once more, when challenged on his belief in the prophecies of the Old Testament, responded that he did believe them true prophecies, but only as every imperfect thing is a true prophecy of the perfect, — this gentleman, when the question was no longer one of literature, but one of custom and institution and social tranquillity, left the ranks of the pioneers, and fell back upon the old guard. He had gone out for a pleasant reconnoitre; he was not prepared for battle.

The excellent divine so carefully delineated and reported in this passage was no other than Dr. Frothingham, father of the Rev. Octavius, whose filial piety did not exceed his love of even justice between man and man. Let the reader compare Dr. Frothingham's opinions as reported by his son with his attitude at the Association meeting and the difference will be easily discerned. Much of the same kind is set down in Parker's journal,

making it plain how much this aspect of the situation wrought upon his mind. Dr. Frothingham, as he remembered, had said that Prophecy and Miracles were Jachin and Boaz: Dr. Noyes had destroyed Jachin and Ripley Boaz; yet Christianity stood. Here was precisely the doctrine of the South Boston sermon and the "Discourse," yet Dr. Frothingham was conspicuous among those who were anxious to relieve the Association of the odium of Parker's membership.

It is possible, and even probable, that Parker exaggerated the amount of double-mindedness in which his professional comrades were involved. Certain it is that some of these differed from him widely, and yet, though constrained to shut him from their pulpits, had real kindness for him in their hearts. No letter of mere intellectual agreement could have been so pleasant to his manly heart as one written him by Chandler Robbins a day or two after the Association meeting. Parker wrote Dr. Francis: —

> Better men have found less sympathy than I. I do not care a rush for what men who differ from me *do* or *say*, but it has grieved me a little, I confess it, to see men who think *as I do* of the historical and mythical matter connected with Christianity, who yet take the stand some of them take. It is like opening a drawer where you expect to find money and discovering that the GOLD is gone; only the copper is left.

When he wrote this, in February, 1842, he did not expect that Dr. Francis would ever come under

the condemnation of his parable. But a little later, when Dr. Francis was to be made a Professor in the Divinity School, he was advised by Dr. Walker[1] to cancel an engagement to exchange with Parker, and he did so. The next year, when Parker was going to Europe, Dr. Francis drew back from supplying his pulpit in his absence and Parker wrote him down "a rotten stick." Eventually the good, soft-fibred man somehow took courage, — his sister[2] may have lent him some of hers, — and he did the manly thing, to Parker's great delight, and ours; for otherwise we might have missed the letters to Dr. Francis which are our best account of Parker's European doings. Some of his letters to Dr. Francis in the summer of 1842, when there was worse to come, reveal the workings of his mind.

June 24. The experience of the last twelve months shows me what I am to expect of the next twelve years. I have no fellowship from the other clergy: no one that helped in my ordination will now exchange ministerial courtesies with me. Only one or two of the Boston Association, and perhaps one or two out of it, will have any ministerial intercourse with me. "They that are younger than I have me in derision." . . . I must confess that I am disappointed in the ministers — the Unitarian ministers. I once thought them noble; that they would be true to an ideal principle of right. I find that no body of men was ever more completely sold to the sense of expediency. . . .

[1] Who had hitherto agreed with Parker that those who thought as he did ought to stand by him.

[2] Lydia Maria Child.

Now, I am not going to sit down tamely, and be driven out of my position by the *opposition* of some, and the neglect of others, whose conduct shows that *they* have no love of freedom except for themselves, — to sail with the popular wind and tide. I shall do this when obliged to desert the pulpit because a free voice and a free heart cannot be in "that bad eminence." I mean to live at Spring Street, perhaps with Ripley [at Brook Farm]. I will study seven or eight months of the year; and, four or five months, I will go about and preach and lecture in the city and glen, by the roadside and fieldside, and wherever men and women may be found. I will go eastward and westward, and northward and southward, and make the land *ring;* and if this New England theology, that cramps the intellect and palsies the soul of us, does not come to the ground, then it shall be because it has more truth in it than I have ever found.

July 25. I see few persons, especially scholarly folk. But, after all, books, nature, and God afford the only society you can *always* have and on reasonable terms. . . . You will go to Cambridge soon, and I rejoice in your prospect of long usefulness and the society of men that will appreciate your worth and sympathize with your aspirations.

In the event Dr. Francis was isolated rather than befriended by his reading habit, which, moreover, got the better of his personal intelligence, so that he came to be more of a satellite reflecting others' thoughts than a star shining with his own. But his influence (for twenty-two years) was all for breadth of outlook and for openness of mind. Parker was determined not to add anything to the difficulties of his new position.

Aug. 9. Now I will speak plainly. I do not wish to stand in your way. I will not knowingly bring on you the censure (or suspicion) of your brethren. Therefore, after you go to Cambridge, I don't see how I can visit you as heretofore. . . . I might, like Nicodemus, come to you by night, privately, but it is not my way.

Sept. 25. There was a time when sound scholarship was deemed essential to a Unitarian minister. I think the denomination has more first-rate scholars from the age of Frothingham down to that of Upham than any other denomination, in proportion to our numbers. [Frothingham, Noyes, Lamson, and Francis were his "big four." His not adding Norton was a momentary whim or slip.] But among the younger men there is a most woeful neglect of sound study of all kinds. . . . Now it seems to me that the denomination has a *right* to expect the first *scholar* that has been Professor of Theology since Norton to reform this evil. . . . Either 1, all study of theology must be abandoned; or 2, it must be studied in a method and with a thoroughness and to an extent which bears some resemblance to the state of other sciences. It is contemptible at present in comparison with astronomy, geology, or even the pretended science of phrenology. . . . Is not theology in about the same state with us that natural philosophy was in before Bacon?

I hope you will excuse me for what may seem very impertinent and the intrusion of a boy's advice.

October 2, 1842, Dr. Channing died in Bennington, Vt., only two months after his great anti-slavery address in Lenox, Mass., on the anniversary of the West India Emancipation. He was only sixty-two years old. Parker wrote a friend,

"You know, as all do, that no man in America has done so much to promote truth, virtue and religion as he. I feel that I have lost one of the most valuable friends I ever had. His mind was wide and his heart was wider yet." He wrote in his journal, "No man since Washington has done so much to elevate his country. . . . Why could not I have died in his stead?"

He attended the funeral October 7th, and noted the undesirable conjunction in the service of two personal enemies and two others differing heaven-wide from the Doctor in their way of thought. In the church-porch one saint was heard saying to another "Well, Dr. Channing is gone," and the other replying "Yes, and much trouble has he given us." Parker had written of the Unitarians as being divided into parties and of Dr. Channing as being the head of the liberals; the other headless. Had the liberal party not lost its head Parker's experience might not have been so tragical. Channing had lamented the growth of "a Unitarian orthodoxy" and "a swollen way of talking about Jesus;" he had deprecated the severe censure meted out to a minister who could not conscientiously administer "the sacrament;" he had "responded entirely to the great idea of the [South Boston] discourse — the immutableness of Christian truth," and was "moved by Parker's strong, heartfelt utterance of it," while he "grieved that he did not give some clear, direct expression to his belief in the Christian miracles." He had also written, "As to

Mr. Parker, I wish him to preach what he thoroughly believes and feels. . . . Let the full heart pour itself forth." But it was in the shadow of Channing's recent death that the Boston Association had summoned Parker to its assembly and endeavored to convince him of his duty to resign his membership, if haply, by so doing, he might relieve the Association from all appearance of complicity with his heresies. Parker's memorial sermon[1] upon Channing was no mere eulogy but a careful and sincere appreciation of the man's life and work, foreboding the much greater things he would do in this kind when such great men as John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster had seen the last of earth.

The reviews of the "Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion" were numerous but mainly trivial, holding up its negative traits to ridicule or reprobation while missing quite or altogether the great tide of affirmation that inundated every page.[2] The first review in the "Examiner" was by Rev. John H. Morison. It differed squarely from Par-

[1] Not to be confounded with his more elaborate estimate reviewing the *Life of Dr. Channing*, by his nephew, William Henry Channing, which appeared in 1848.

[2] Orestes Brownson, a ship of many different flags, first one and then another, now drawing near his final anchorage in the port of Rome, discharged a full broadside; *i. e.*, devoted to Parker's book a whole number of the *Boston Quarterly Review*. One of the reviews which Parker particularly prized was written by the Rev. Noah Porter, the orthodox preacher and scholar who was afterward President of Yale College. It was the beginning of a correspondence and friendship between the two men which lasted until Parker's death.

ker's anti-supernaturalism, but said, "We do not feel called upon to cast him off or deny to him the Christian name." This, with a dozen other lines in cordial recognition of Parker's deep religiousness, was cut out by the editors, but Mr. Morison, always kind and always meaning to be just, made good the loss by sending the too generous passage to the daily press, where, printed in italics, it got a hundred readers where the "Examiner" had one. Reviewing an article commenting severely upon Parker which had been rejected by the "Dial" and was then published by the author, James Freeman Clarke wrote of Parker's teachings as "the new gospel of shallow naturalism," a strange misnomer for a system which was nothing if not contemptuous of "naturalism," as generally named and known, and compact of spiritualism. Parker was further characterized by Mr. Clarke as "the expounder of Negative Transcendentalism, as Mr. R. W. Emerson is the expounder of Positive Transcendentalism." The former could not consist with Christianity; the latter could. But, in simple truth, while Parker did much more in the way of negative criticism than Emerson he was much more affirmative than the Concord seer of a definite Theism and of Immortality. Parker's method was denounced as "at once ignorant and presumptuous; ignorant of the deep wants of the soul; presumptuous in its contempt and self-confidence." It was not long before Mr. Clarke made large amends for this assault, which is painted in here as a background

against which the great nobility of his conduct a little further on will come out in strong relief.

One review of the book stood out from all others, preëminent for its ability and lofty praise, that of James Martineau in the "Prospective Review" of February, 1846; so late that many of the wounds of '42 and '43 had cicatrized — not healed — before this precious ointment came: "Honor then to the manly simplicity of Theodore Parker! Perish who may among Scribes and Pharisees, — 'orthodox liars for God,' — he at least has delivered his soul." He touched the essential point of the whole controversy when he said, "To hear the boastful anger of our stout believers one would suppose that to take up our faith on too easy terms, and to be drawn into discipleship less by logic than by love, were the very Sin against the Holy Ghost." The position of Parker's conservative critics was clearly stated and Martineau's dissent from it made perfectly plain, and *pari passu* his assent to Parker's central thought. At the same time various particulars were criticised — something that looked like Pantheism and a doctrine of Inspiration that made of one kind God's immanence in matter and in man. The former Martineau was bound to overhaul by all the predilections of his maturer thought. Because he had been a necessarian in his youth, after the manner of Priestley, he was ever after almost bitter in his assault on anything bearing either a real or formal resemblance to the doctrine of philosophical neces-

[illegible] "[illegible]" But, having consulted his master he would [illegible] "Indeed, the whole spirit and character of the book proclaim its affinity with a period quite remote from the Pythagorean [illegible]" Bunsen's "Christianity" has been welcomed as [illegible] by an other hand from the time of the Apostolic [illegible].

It would not be supposed that Bunsen's readers [illegible] with the various conjectural [illegible]. It [illegible] The Hindoo [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ing German hymns of mystic confidence in God. Moreover he wrote "Six Plain Sermons on the Times" and delivered them in Boston and elsewhere to seven different assemblages. These were carefully prepared while at the same time the tiresome, microscopic proof-reading of the De Wette translation went on, its publication being for him the event of July, 1843. Not till the work on this was finished did he know how tired he was. There was an imperative demand for rest. Body and mind both needed it; the tired heart most of all. On the eve of his departure for Europe he preached a sermon to his Roxbury people reviewing his ministry with them. It summed up clearly and forcibly what he had done and tried to do, and dwelt very tenderly upon his fears lest they should leave him, as other friends had done.

> Fear in the churches, like fire in the woods, runs fast and far, leaving few spots not burned. I did not know what you would do. I thought you would do what others did; others had promised more but fled at the first fire. I made up my mind that you might ask a dissolution of our union.

He told them what he had planned to do, had they made good his fears: "If I could not find a place in a church, then I meant to take it in a hall, in a school-house, or a barn, under the open sky, wherever a word could be spoken and heard." There cannot be a doubt that he would have done so in the imagined case, for not Fox or Wesley had more conviction that he had a message which

he must proclaim, but necessity was not laid upon him.

He sailed for Europe September 5, 1843, a kind friend having furnished him with the means for a year's travel. A new volume of the journal was begun, and on the fly leaf is a simple drawing of the West Roxbury meeting-house, set there as if to keep him

True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

One of the first entries has a similar intent: —

I am now to spend a year in foreign travel. In this year I shall earn nothing, neither my food nor my clothes, nor even the paper I write on. I shall increase my debt to the world by every potato I eat, and each mile I travel. How shall I repay the debt? Only by extraordinary efforts after I return.

His voyage of twenty-five days in a sailing vessel was most miserable, and bred in him such a terror of the sea that when he came to die in Florence one reason that he gave for being buried there was that the sea had treated him so ill. But he caught thirty-seven subjects for sermons on the way over. His European journal and letters are interesting almost exclusively for their personal equation. Descriptions of foreign cities, buildings, and pictures were long since a drug in the market, and his were seldom of the best. Hawthorne's judgments of pictures and statues were sufficiently crude; Parker's were more so, if possible, — as where he says that Michael Angelo, a product of

the Renaissance, was "the Middle Age all over." But he brought to everything an honest mind. He had no conventional admirations. His were no guide-book thrills. When he sees the Madonna della Seggiola in the Pitti Palace, and writes, "What a painting! God in heaven, what a painting!" we like the note because it sounds so true. Of course the subject was one which always tantalized his hungry heart. It is not clear how such a journey could have given him much mental relaxation. A young man in a contemporary novel describes himself as "resting like fury." The description would fit Parker like a glove. His interest in books and the men, especially the living men, who had written them, was always on the alert. To meet face to face the scholars whom till now he had only seen reflected in his books was his peculiar joy. In London he met Rev. John James Tayler, a leading Unitarian scholar, whose study of the Fourth Gospel is one of the best of many, and convincing of its late, unapostolic origin. He also met Francis W. Newman, who had already taken his line of wide divergence from his brother, but whose books were as yet unwritten. He and Parker differed about Plato and the relative truth of his Socrates and Xenophon's. In Paris he sees Cousin, who had been one of his helpers, and hears St. Hilaire lecture; also hears lectures on Arabic and half a dozen different matters. All was grist that came to his mill. He called nothing common or unclean. Statistics of all kinds jostle Corneille and

Cicero and Descartes and Alexandrian mysticism on his journal's copious page. He sees the Venus of Milo, "a *glorious human creature* made for all the events of life," while (this in Florence) "the *toy woman* came to her perfect flower in the Venus de Medici." The unconscious utilitarian speaks in these æsthetic judgments.

Lyons had for him its memories of Christian massacres by the best of pagan emperors, and in them he forgets, the journal says, the Boston Association; the fact being that they remind him of it and brace him for his milder sufferings. The memories of Avignon are those of the papal captivity and the Roman inquisition, the instruments of which bite into his imagination as they once had done into men's living flesh. Genoa's sumptuous palaces attract him much, her handsome women more. At Pisa there is "another tower which resembles the great one only in its *leaning*. This is like all imitators; they get the halting step, not the inspiration." From Pisa he went to Florence, and in Savonarola's cell did homage to "that dauntless soul who feared nothing *but* wrong and fear." He is much impressed by Michael Angelo's symbolic figures on the Medicean tombs. With naïve unconsciousness he penetrates the sculptor's secret when he says, "I do not see the connection of these figures with a tomb or chapel." No more did Michael Angelo. His meaning was, —

> While such things last, better to be mere stone.

In Rome he is exceedingly alliterative in his description of English tourists: "Wherever the English go they carry with them their pride, their prejudice, their port, their porter, and their pickles." He lets his fancy play with the relics of the Christian city, even while his understanding halts. He brings no ungracious skepticism to the Catacombs, and they shake his heart with deep emotions of gratefulness and admiration. "Yet I could not but think how easy it must have seemed, and have been, too, to bear the cross of martyrdom." He is convinced that the Church departed from its primitive simplicity long before Constantine. In the Coliseum he had naturally a pagan thought — what a fine place it would be in which to preach "Parkerism." He duly visited the Pope, then Gregory XVI., who received him and others very kindly, wearing a monk's simple dress. It is by no means an unsympathetic mind that he brings to the judgment of the Roman Church. He thinks it "cultivates feelings of reverence, of faith, of gentleness, better than the Protestant churches; but I can't think it affects the conscience so powerfully, and I know that at present it does not appeal to the reason or practical good sense." A great deal of hard work went to his endeavor to do perfect justice to the ancient city who is "the mother of us all."

All the poet in him stirs to the motion of the Venetian gondolas and dreams a dream of what the glory of the city formerly had been, "the pre-

sence that once so strangely rose beside the waters." Padua, Vicenza, and Verona did not detain him long. He must have walked Verona's spacious square remembering Dante's homeless feet with conscious sympathy. Here was another who had been in hell, and must soon be going back. He crosses the Alps and sees Innsbrück, with its chief wonder of Maximilian's splendid cenotaph, and then goes to Munich, and to Vienna, which impresses him as the most frivolous city in Europe, — far more frivolous than Paris. At Prague, as everywhere where Jews abound, he makes a study of the Ghetto. The ancient synagogue, its walls so black with grime, lest cleaning them might efface the name of God, must have been to him a lively parable. In Germany, except for Dresden, where he had twelve days for Raphael's Sistine Madonna and the other pictures, the interest is centred more on persons than on things. In Berlin, Schelling, at seventy, was sadly lacking in that old strength which had moved so many, Parker with the rest. He heard Vatke also, but there was no hint of his fruitful germ of all that has now come to flower and fruit in Kuenen and Wellhausen. Going to Potsdam he felt that, like the Roman Emperor, he had lost a day. Sans Souci was "sans everything" to him. In Halle he heard lectures by Tholuck and had delightful interviews with him and Schlosser, then a veteran, and Gervinus, who was Parker's junior by a few years. By this time Parker's sober

second thought concerning Strauss had come to him: —

> Gervinus thinks that the influence of Strauss has passed away; so says Ulmann. I think them mistaken. The *first* influence, that of making a noise, is over, no doubt; but the truth that he has brought to light will sink into German theology and mould it anew. . . . *Men mistake a cessation of the means for a cessation of the end.*

His visits to Ewald and F. C. Baur at Tübingen were highly significant. He found Ewald with his hair about his shoulders, wearing a kind of calico blouse, with no waistcoat or neckerchief, and with a corresponding freedom in his thought, though he regarded De Wette as too skeptical. Baur must have made for Parker a bad quarter of an hour, for when Parker asked him how many hours a day he studied he answered, "Alas! only eighteen;' two or three hours more than Parker's maximum allowance. To go to Bâle to see De Wette was to make a sacred pilgrimage, so long had he been conversing with his mind. He was much disappointed to find that De Wette had not received a copy of the "Introduction" which he had ordered sent to him. He found De Wette more conservative than he had been; somewhat subdued to the environment of timidity in which he had worked so long. But Parker's explanation was his lack of "a sound and settled philosophy," of Transcendentalism all compact.

One of the most attractive incidents of his Ger-

man travel was a visit in Berlin to Bettine von Arnim, whose friendship with Goethe was taken more seriously in 1843 than it is now.

May 23, 1844. I told her that, if the men lack courage [as she complained] she had enough; that she had the courage of a Jewish prophet and the inspiration of a Christian apostle. She said she was not Christian, but heathen, — she prayed to Jupiter. I told her that was nothing; there was but one God, whose name was neither Jupiter nor Jehovah, and he took each *true* prayer. Then she said again she was no Christian. I asked, "Have you no respect for Christ?" "None for the *person*, for he had done more harm to the world than any other man." I found, however, that for the man Jesus of Nazareth, and for all the great doctrines of religion, she had the profoundest respect. I told her there was, to my thinking, but one religion, — that was *being good and doing good.*

A complete disclosure of his thought would, however, have revealed that, to his thinking, a man could not *be good* without loving God, at least unconsciously. His piety and morality were one, and that one was piety "in its descent and being" albeit morality in its manifestation to the world.

In England he met Hennell, a giant in those days of English critical beginnings, and Sterling, drawing near to his untimely end, and Carlyle, with whom he had tea, but, apparently, less nectar and ambrosia than he had hoped. Martineau had not yet come to live in London. Parker sought him in Liverpool and preached for him, there being no Liverpool Association to put up the bars.

Here and there, especially in Germany, he had written Dr. Francis letters of unconscionable length, telling him a thousand things about the libraries, the universities, and the professors, which he knew would do him good. He praises his courage in supplying his pulpit, hearing that the brethren will not exchange with him. He wonders what the Unitarians will do with two such liberal scholars as him and Noyes in the Divinity School. Some of them grew up to them in a few years and others passed beyond them into larger views.

Mr. Parker reached home September 1, 1844, after a voyage of twelve days, "completing the quickest passage ever made." It was evening when he got there, but the neighbors, and their children "in their several beds," must be seen before he could seek his own. His year of travel had not been unmixed delight. He had had ugly symptoms in his head and side. But the year had been one of the most profitable of all his course. He had seen many things of which he had only read before, and they had been made real for him. Henceforth much of his reading would have a body and form it had not yet had. He was grateful for so much, glad to be back again; but wondered much what the untrodden future had in store.

## CHAPTER VI

### SWORD AND TROWEL

THE significance of my title is that Parker's divided duty for some time after his return from Europe was not unlike that of Nehemiah's men at work upon Jerusalem's wall. With one hand they wrought at the wall and with the other they carried a weapon. The work, under such conditions, could not have gone on smoothly and been all that it would have been could each workman have had both hands for it. It is interesting to imagine what Parker's work would have been if he had not been fettered, first by a theological and then by a political controversy. In that case we should have had more books from him and better; they would have been more meditative in their tone, with fewer lines that we could wish to blot because they bear either the marks of haste or some trace of irritation with his critics' dull misapprehension or their cruel wrong. What he saw, he saw so plainly that others' inability to see it struck him as willful blindness, and the compliment that he paid to their intelligence was on its obverse side an imputation of intellectual dishonesty, of which there was, as of Mercutio's wound, enough. He had the defect

of his emotional quality. Like all affectionate people, *he thought in persons*, and could with difficulty separate the opinion from the man, and, while reprobating that, let the man go unscathed. He could do this when his emotion was recollected in tranquillity, but not when he was writing and speaking at white heat. There was no lack of censors at the time. Faithful were the wounds of friends, who put their fingers on each ailing spot with the best intentions in the world. One of the strangest things we have to reckon with is his naïve unconsciousness of his own hard sayings — how many and how hard they were. It is the stranger because he was so sensitive to every counter-stroke. But this unconsciousness was not uniform. Some of his most awful personal denunciations were written in an agony of prayer and tears. Gladly would he have been delivered from the necessity of braiding such a whip for clergymen and politicians desecrating the temple of God's truth and justice with their sordid bartering. But his was Luther's case: So help him God he could "do no other."

When we come to see how Parker's studies were invaded by the mighty opposites of the pro-slavery and anti-slavery parties, we shall not regret the sacrifice he made; nor can we regret his theological and religious controversy, whatever its deduction from the more genial aspect he might otherwise have worn. In either case the vigor and splendor of his personality were immeasurably enhanced.

Here the useful country minister was made the prophet of the century, and there one of the chief among the champions of the anti-slavery cause.

In matters theological and religious, to be "mighty careful to tell no lies," the mark of another clergyman's high calling, was not enough for him. He had not so learned the Unitarian gospel, sitting at Channing's feet and looking up into those large spiritual eyes. He saw that in the original Unitarian controversy the denials all had to come out sooner or later, and that the final explosion was more dangerous every day it was delayed. He remembered the old charges of hypocritical concealment and the humiliation of rebutting them. The policy of silence and reserve might do for others; it was impossible for him. But if, after his return from Europe, he had been quietly ignored, or had been made the object of no direct attack, he might, possibly, have remained a suburban minister all his days. As it was, the bad blood of his opponents was the seed of his heretical church. Their persecution gave him the costly and magnificent advertisement which he required to bring his larger talents into fuller play. We cannot be too grateful to them for the service which they rendered him, and, through him, the religious world.

He took up his work again in September, 1844. In November following, Rev. John T. Sargent asked him to exchange with him. Now, it so happened that Mr. Sargent's Suffolk Street Chapel

was a mission chapel under the charge of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches. In a letter to the Boston Association, Parker gave him a good character, saying veraciously : —

> His family contributed largely to the erection and embellishment of the chapel from which he is expelled. He has himself spent freely his own property for the poor under his charge and has been untiring in his labors. No shadow of reproach attaches to his name, but on the contrary he is distinguished beyond his fellows by the excellence of his character and the nobleness of his life. A righteous and a self-denying man he went out into the lanes and highways of Boston, gathering together the poor and forsaken, and formed a Society which prospered under his ministry and became strongly attached to him.

The officers of the Benevolent Fraternity hardly needed to be told these things. They knew them and justly appreciated them; also that Mr. Sargent's family was one of property and standing. They knew, moreover, that Mr. Sargent differed frankly from Mr. Parker's heretical opinions. But he had given Parker the hand of fellowship and he would not withdraw it. Thereupon the Fraternity sent him such a letter of correction and reproof that nothing was possible for him but to resign his charge. The situation was not a pleasant one for the Fraternity, but its officials had the courage of their convictions and Mr. Sargent found his occupation gone.[1]

[1] After a short settlement in Somerville, he preached infre-

Close upon the Sargent incident came another. December 26th, Mr. Parker took his turn at the Boston Thursday lecture, a venerable institution which had fallen away a good deal from its original estate; at least in popular estimation. It was preached at the First Church, of which Dr. Frothingham was minister, at 11 A. M., the young Octavius "doing arduous and unremunerated duty at the bellows," little imagining that he would one day be the biographer of the heretic who crowded with an eager throng the pews which generally mustered only a few scattered individuals and sporadic groups. Parker's subject was "The Relation of Jesus to his Age and the Ages." Those walls had never echoed to a loftier tribute to the excellence of Jesus, but his humanity was not disguised. It was made as plain as words could make it, while still the permanence of his influence was chanted

quently in the more liberal pulpits, and I would not willingly forget one of his sermons which I heard in Marblehead on the complicity of the North with the South in the maintenance of slavery. The text was, Jer. i. 13, "I see a seething-pot and the face thereof is towards the North." He was an efficient worker upon anti-slavery lines. Later his spacious house was the attractive local habitation of the Radical Club, Mrs. Sargent doing its honors very graciously. Strangely enough the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches has fallen heir to the estate of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, Parker Memorial Hall, and it has been the constant aim of Rev. E. A. Horton, the most active officer of the Fraternity, to administer the trust in a manner honorable to Parker's memory. When Mr. Horton was a theological student at Meadville he found Parker's works conspicuously absent from the Library and instigated me to secure a gift of Miss Cobbe's edition, which the faculty did not refuse.

in a rhapsody of lyric speech. Never was utterance more affirmative; but the negation of the supernatural was there, and the brethren fastened their attention upon this and worried themselves into a fever of excitement over it. Something must be done to prevent a repetition of this scandal, and the ingenious mind of Dr. Frothingham found out the remedy. It was to take back into his own hands the management of the Thursday lecture and invite whom he would, conspicuously leaving Mr. Parker out. The lecture had originally been the First Church's own affair; it had not been for one hundred and seventy years, but what more simple than to return to first principles. "The device," says O. B. Frothingham, "was ingenious but not handsome. The ungodly called it a trick." The Thursday lecture died of it, and not Parker. It was a lingering death, and a resurrection was afterward attempted but without success.

No month was now without its sign. In January, 1845, James Freeman Clarke exchanged pulpits with Mr. Parker,[1] frankly disavowing in advance all sympathy with his heretical opinions. "Black Sunday," wrote Mr. Clarke in his journal. It proved blacker than he thought. Fifteen of his strongest men, financially and socially, with their families, left his society and joined themselves to

[1] Whose sermon "The Excellence of Goodness" is good reading now and will be at any time to come. It may have been of this, but it was, I think, of another, that one of Mr. Clarke's saintly women said to Parker at the church door, "I wish that Theodore Parker could have heard *that* sermon!"

Rev. R. C. Waterston, who, as minister of one of the Fraternity Chapels, had officiously proclaimed that he was no such consorter with heretics as Mr. Sargent, and had been rewarded by an invitation to become the pastor of a new society with a fine new church. It was a hard blow for Mr. Clarke, trying to build a church on unconventional lines, and fighting against odds. Good men, one of them John A. Andrew, whom a great fame awaited as Governor of Massachusetts, expostulated with both Clarke and Parker, hoping to prevent the exchange, but they knew not what manner of spirit they were of. The men who agreed with Parker, and yet dared not exchange with him, must have seen themselves reflected in the bright mirror of Clarke's preëminent nobility and been much ashamed. Little heart could they have had for the meeting of the Association the next night at Bartol's (January 27), the subject for discussion being, as Clarke's diary witnesses, "Expulsion of Theodore Parker."

It is worth noticing that Mr. Clarke was soon after made a director of the American Unitarian Association,[1] tangible evidence that the Unitarian principle of intellectual liberty had not perished in the house of its friends.[2] But Parker had

[1] *Not*, yet once more, the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers.

[2] In general Parker was much less feared and shunned by the suburban and country ministers outside the Boston Association, they not feeling so responsible for him as did the members of that Association.

other sheep who were not of that fold and they would have a shepherd. January 22d, four days in advance of the exchange with Clarke, a number of gentlemen met and passed one brief resolution: "That the Rev. Theodore Parker have a chance to be heard in Boston." The event for February was his first sermon in the Melodeon, on Sunday the 16th of that month.

Parker had found himself more at home than ever in the West Roxbury pulpit after his return from Europe. The people were hungry for his word, more sweet and wholesome than any that Dr. Francis and the other substitutes had given them. On his part there was a new sense of his mission. He had not been to Wittenberg for nothing and taken counsel there with Luther's indomitable spirit. At many points the recollections of his foreign travel touched his thought with images of beauty and of power. Brook Farm, only a mile away across the fields, was now entering on its later and more formal, Fourierite, stage. But to walk over there was to find Ripley, always a congenial spirit, who had not forgotten his good visit with Parker in 1837, or another in 1839, "which was in fact the causal and immediate antecedent of Brook Farm with all its wondrous experiences,"[1] and with Ripley others of quick intel-

[1] Letter of Ripley to Parker, October 25, 1858. But Parker took no stock in the enterprise except literally. See Frothingham's *George Ripley*, p. 194, and his *Theodore Parker*, p. 138; also Lindsay Swift's *Brook Farm*, p. 22, *et passim*.

ligence. His Sunday congregation had generally a few visitors from the Farm. George William Curtis and his brother Burrill, who had come frequently, had now gone to Concord to try farming there. If they had come to church wearing the bright chintz blouses and pretty tasseled caps in which young Higginson saw them on one of his "cheerful yesterdays" the sensation would have been immense.

There were many offshoots of "the newness" in those days and among them was the "Dial," which told its first sunny hours in 1840 and its last overclouded ones in 1844. The best accounts of it will be found in Higginson's "Margaret Fuller Ossoli," and Cooke's "Ralph Waldo Emerson," but the four volumes are its own best evidence. Emerson describes it as "a modest quarterly journal under the editorship of Margaret Fuller," and says, "Perhaps its writers were also its chief readers. But it had some noble papers; perhaps the best of Margaret Fuller's. It had some numbers highly important, because they contained papers by Theodore Parker," which, so Emerson is quoted, "sold the numbers." Emerson and Ripley were associated with Miss Fuller in the editing for two years, and then, her health failing, Emerson became editor-in-chief. For Parker it was never satisfactory. The only early number to which he contributed nothing was the one which Carlyle denounced as "all spirit-like, aeriform, aurora-borealis like." For this number Miss Ful-

ler wrote 85 of its 136 pages — this proportion because the articles promised by others did n't come to hand. She writes of Parker's being "disgusted with Thoreau's pieces," and for Alcott's "Orphic Sayings" and others his appreciation was as much below their worth as Emerson's above it. His own "Massachusetts Quarterly Review" of a later date expressed better than the "Dial" his ideal of what a quarterly should be, — "the Dial with a beard," — but it has had no such permanent engagement as the "Dial" for those who have been profoundly interested in the history of New England thought and culture.

Parker had more than one good reason for thinking kindly of the "Dial." It brought the mountain air of Emerson's thought into his study, and it gave him an opportunity to reach a wider audience than that of his Roxbury meeting-house. He availed himself of this opportunity with much eagerness. In the first number, July, 1840, his article was "The Divine Presence in Nature and the Soul." For companions it had at least four immortals, — Emerson's "Problem;" Thoreau's "Sympathy;" John S. Dwight's "Rest;" and Mrs. Ellen Hooper's "Lines:" —

I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty.

Subsequent numbers, until he went to Europe, had almost invariably some contribution from his hand. He was no longer so welcome to the "Examiner" as he had been, or could only write for it with his

left hand; hence the "Dial" opening was more precious. His "Thoughts on Labor" appeared in April, 1841; "The Pharisees" in the July number of that year, while in the number for January, 1842, he had two elaborate articles, "German Literature" and "Thoughts on Theology," reviewing "Dorner's Christology." His review of Strauss appeared in the "Examiner" of April, 1840, and a graphic sketch of St. Bernard in October, 1841; none of these articles except the Strauss reached the degree of elaboration which marked several of his articles for the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review," which began its course in December, 1847, ran for three years, and then "came to an end directly through the failure of the publishers, though they had always found the 'Review' profitable to them." He joined himself reluctantly with Mr. Emerson and J. E. Cabot [1] to edit this "Review," but soon became sole editor and principal writer. Here appeared his review of "Channing's Life," "Character of Mr. Prescott as a Historian," "Prescott's Conquest of Mexico," "The Administration of the Late Mr. Polk," "The Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson," "Hildreth's History of the United States," "The Political Destination of America;" also such elaborate sermons as those upon "The Death of John Quincy Adams," and "The Mexican War."

[1] Emerson's excellent biographer. His account of the matter, *Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, p. 497, is quite different from that of Mr. Weiss; *q. v.*, vol. i. p. 266.

Theodore Parker's distinction was in but small part that of a man of letters. To pure literature, which must have, to be so constituted, some extrinsic grace to match its intrinsic quality, he made no considerable addition. The preacher in him was too overpowering to permit a brother near the throne. The habit of the essayist was too much that of the rapid sermonizer, who did not care to "file his line" or had no time to do it. His sermon style, loose, copious, expansive, eloquent, — admirable for its purpose, — was too ungirt, diffuse, redundant for the printed page. But his power of statement was remarkable, and the cumulative force of it — the massing of facts, the abundance of happy illustration. A certain homely beauty was the most attractive feature of both his speaking and writing, and there was more of this in his sermons than in his reviews and other articles prepared for this or that periodical. Of the homeliness his vocabulary was sufficient proof. Ninety-one of his words out of each hundred were Anglo-Saxon, to eighty-five of Webster's and seventy-four of Sumner's. Counting incidentally one of his pages, I was astonished at the number of words and found I had been counting monosyllables for the most part. As with words, so too with things. He wrote : —

> The roots which the beasts and which men feed upon — what homely and yet what comely things they are ! nay, the commonest of them all has a certain hard but masculine beauty and attractiveness."

He said of the potatoes: —

"I cannot see them lying in heaps in the farmer's fields, or in wagon-loads brought to market, the earth still clinging to their sides, without reverence for that infinite wisdom which puts such beauty into common things.

That "wholeness of tissue" which Matthew Arnold missed in Emerson was seldom to be found in any continuous piece of Parker's writing, but we can never go far with him without coming upon some passage of sweet and wholesome beauty, and his epithets were so vivid that dozens of them make a picture for the mind, as where the farmer's boy, lying awake after he has gone to bed, hears the ripe apples plumping down in the still moonlight. It was because of such things that the common people heard him gladly. He called the words of Jesus "words so deep that a child could understand them," and to that lovely paradox he often furnished a convincing illustration.

He was not one of those "indolent reviewers" who, fearing to break a butterfly upon the wheel, do nothing in a serious manner, and depend for their knowledge of all subjects on the books which they review. No one could have done review work from the surface of his mind more easily than Parker, but few have ever gone about that work with such deliberate special preparation. The pages of his journal show how much of this went into the foundations of his review of Strauss's "Life of Jesus." Page after page is thick with

notes upon his reading and references to authorities. There was the book itself to read, — some 1600 pages, — and I remember well how that took me a solid month, at least two hundred hours; but that was only the beginning of his toil. He read all the books, pamphlets, and reviews attacking or defending Strauss. When he came to write, he wasted time and space upon a lively application of Strauss's theory to certain known historical events. He wrote too much as if Strauss denied the existence of an historical Jesus. It is certain that all subsequent studies have tended to confirm what is most essential in Strauss, namely, that ideas have had enormous plastic stress upon the alleged facts of the New Testament narration; especially those ideas that were in process of development in the first and second centuries.

Before writing the two articles on Prescott's histories he read hard for seven months upon the subjects of those histories. He read all of Prescott's own authorities except certain MSS. which were Prescott's private property. The review of Polk's administration reads as if he had read every book, congressional report, and newspaper bearing on the subject, which he treated in the largest way, reviewing the whole course of the Texan trouble from its earliest beginning to its monstrous end. He was never more effective than in such work as this. His stock and mastery of facts were something marvelous. But he was not content unless he could set his concrete examples in a frame of

philosophic generalization. Hence, where the Irish legislator would say "a few words before I begin," he is more prodigal; his introductions are commonly too long. He was never so happy in dealing with literary subjects as in dealing with those concretely ethical and political and religious; and never so happy in dealing with the large and metaphysical aspects of religion as when treating its specific manifestations. Thus, his elaborate review of Emerson is mainly interesting for its cordial recognition of Emerson's preëminent ability. He praises Emerson for qualities generally denied to Parker himself: "There is not in all his works a single jeer or ill-natured sarcasm." Yet one passage reads as if he were beholding himself in the glass and painting himself as he was. He is praising Emerson's American geography and botany and so on. What he says is true of Emerson, but as true of Parker: —

He tells of the rhodora, the club-moss, the blooming clover, not of the hibiscus and the asphodel. He knows the humble-bee, the blackbird, the bat, and the wren, and is not ashamed to say or sing of the things under his own eyes. He illustrates his high thought by common things out of our plain New England life, — the meeting in the church, the Sunday-school, the dancing-school, a huckleberry party, the boys and girls hastening home from school, the youth in the shop, beginning an unconscious courtship with his unheeding customer, the farmers about their work in the fields, the bustling trader in the city, the cattle, the new hay, the voters at a town meeting, the village brawler in a

tavern full of tipsy riot, the conservative who thinks the nation is lost if his ticket chance to miscarry, the bigot worshiping the knot-hole through which a dusty beam of light has looked in upon his darkness, the radical who declares that nothing is good if established, and the patent reformer who screams in your ears that he can finish the world with a single touch, — and out of all these he makes his poetry, or illustrates his philosophy. . . . Even Mr. Emerson's recent exaggerated praise of England [1] is such a panegyric as none but an American could bestow.

Parker valued intuition as the source of primary religious ideas, but distrusted it for workaday affairs. He complains of Emerson that "he undervalues the logical, demonstrative, and historical understanding." He did not doubt the reality of "ecstasy," "the state of intuition in which man loses his individual self-consciousness," but "all that mankind has learned in this way is little compared with the results of reflection, of meditation, and careful, conscientious looking after truth." "Meditation" was not one of his own mental qualities. It was one of Channing's to a preëminent degree, and here the comparison between him and Parker is to the disadvantage of the latter. Parker resents Emerson's disparagement of books, but his own devotion to them was excessive. John S. Dwight put his finger on this ailing spot in March, 1837:

Don't you often turn aside from your own reflection from the fear of losing what another has said or written

[1] In *English Traits*.

on the subject? Have you not too much of a mania for all printed things, — as if books were [more than?] the symbols of that truth to which the student aspires? You write, you read, you talk, you think in a hurry for fear of not getting all.

A lack of self-reliance has not often been attributed to Parker, but plainly there was something of it here.

When he says that no man is further from Pantheism than Emerson, the advocate has usurped the judge's bench. He has "a pain in his brother's side" which for a moment dims his sight. It is not perfectly clear when he writes of Emerson's poems. He praises most some that were thought to be obscure. Generally he had sound appreciation of their best elements, and reprobated real faults; yet he could only say of the "Woodnotes" that it had "some pleasing lines," but that "a pine-tree which should talk like Mr. Emerson's pine ought to be plucked up by the roots and cast into the sea." "Monadnoc" is written down as "forced and unnatural, as well as poor and weak." This sky-born transcendentalist was not only "rich in saving common sense," but sometimes matter-of-fact and prosaic overmuch in his dealings with things imaginative and poetic.

His reading of poetry was wide and included much of the best that had been written, yet we find things that were merely pretty pasted into his journal. The older English poets were well known to him and the quotations in his sermons are fre-

quently from them. Of course George Herbert's "Man" was a lasting favorite with him, and William Blake's "Divine Image" —

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love —

is written in his journal of 1842 when it was treasure known to few. His own satisfaction in writing verse was out of all proportion with his poetical ability. He did much in the way of translation; doing German mystic hymns into English, and attempting such elusive things as Heine's songs. His own "Protean Wishes," published in the "Dial," July, 1841, is a pleasant variation of a well-worn theme. Three of his sonnets (perhaps more) appeared in the "Liberty Bell," which was rung once a year by the managers of the Anti-Slavery Fair. One of these (1846),[1] divided into three quatrains, dropping the couplet from the end, and somewhat changed, has long been a favorite hymn in liberal and even in some orthodox churches. It is reproduced herewith as printed in the "Liberty Bell": [2] —

Oh thou great Friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appear'd in humblest guise below,
Sin to rebuke and break the captive's chain,
To call thy brethren forth from want and woe, —

[1] Probably written earlier, as was the other published at the same time: —

Jesus there is no no name so dear thine — (*sic*).

[2] The last long-drawn line is much varied as printed by different biographers and others quoting it. The best variant, but, I think, without authority is, —

To uplift their bleeding brothers from the dust.

Thee would I sing. Thy Truth is still the Light
Which guides the nations — groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day;
Yes! thou art still the Life; thou art the Way
The holiest know, — Light, Life, and Way of Heaven!
And they who dearest hope and deepest pray,
Toil by the Light, Life, Way, which thou hast given.
And by thy Truth aspiring mortals trust
T' uplift their faint and bleeding brothers rescued from the dust.

In the "Liberty Bell" of 1851, there is "A Sonnet for the Times." The subject is the same as that of Whittier's "Ichabod," — Webster's moral suicide of March 7, 1850, — and it does not compare well with that splendid malediction. The following is better. Quite frequently his personal devoutness ran into this arbitrary form: —

Father, I will not ask for wealth or fame,
Though once they would have joyed my carnal sense:
I shudder not to bear a hated name,
Wanting all wealth, myself my sole defense.
But give me, Lord, eyes to behold the truth;
A seeing sense that knows the eternal right;
A heart with pity filled, and gentlest ruth;
A manly faith that makes all darkness light:
Give me the power to labor for mankind;
Make me the mouth of such as cannot speak;
Eyes let me be to groping men and blind;
A conscience to the base; and to the weak
Let me be hands and feet; and to the foolish, mind;
And lead still further on such as thy kingdom seek.

The following hymn, which he introduced into a sermon on the Ecclesiastical Conception of God, is far less poetical than the deliberate prose of his more lyrical moments, and yet not lightly to be set aside: —

In darker days and nights of storm,
Men knew Thee but to fear thy form;
And in the reddest lightnings saw
Thine arm avenge insulted law.

In brighter days, we read thy love
In flowers beneath, in stars above;
And in the track of every storm
Behold thy beauty's rainbow form.

And in the reddest lightning's path
We see no vestiges of wrath,
But always wisdom — perfect love
From flowers beneath to stars above.

See, from on high sweet influence rains
On palace, cottage, mountains, plains!
No hour of wrath shall mortals fear,
For their Almighty Love is here.

Much better, and, if not poetry, something to that allied, is "The Pilgrim's Star," first printed from the journal by Mr. Sanborn in Crandall's "Representative Sonnets by American Poets."

To me thou cam'st, the earliest lamp of light,
When youthful day must sadly disappear, —
A star prophetic in a world of night,
Revealing what a heaven of love was near:
And full of rapture at thy joyous sight,
I journeyed fearless on the starlight way, —
A thousand other lights came forth on height,
But queenliest of all still shone thy ray.

O blessed lamp of Beauty and of Love,
How long I 've felt thy shining far away!
Now, when the morn has chased the shadows gray,
Still guided by thy memory forth I rove.
I 'll journey on till dark still lighter prove,
And Star and Pilgrim meet where all is day.

If Parker's skill in verse was slight, it was sufficient to afford him and his friends much simple pleasure. He could rhyme with much facility, and never used his gift more pleasantly than for the golden wedding of his friends Deacon Samuel and Mary Goddard May. There are a dozen stanzas strung upon the thread of "Auld Lang Syne."

It would not be well to infer the amount of Parker's learning from the number and the character of his books. These in their stupendous aggregation represented not so much his accomplishment as his aspiration. He had some twenty languages and dialects well in hand, but in his library there were grammars and dictionaries of many others which he hoped to master soon or late. It was so with other books, and moreover his purchases had regard sometimes to the benevolent intention on which he acted when he bequeathed his books to the Boston Public Library: 11,190 volumes and 2500 pamphlets at his death; at Mrs. Parker's death 2397 volumes being added, of which 280 were her personal property. This collection[1] was well under way in Roxbury, where he made the cases for it with his own hands, which had not yet forgotten what they learned in the old belfry shop. How could he buy so many books when his salary was never large? By lecturing frequently in the lyceum courses of those days

[1] Much increased by Ripley's library, which Parker bought outright when Ripley needed money more than books to carry on Brook Farm.

and putting all the money earned in this way into books. He was well advertised by his opponents, and had as many opportunities as he desired. In one year (1855) we find him spending $1500 for books, but in 1855 he was already saving his book-money to protect fugitive slaves. He could use his lecture money the more freely because there was a fairy godmother on the scene — the kind aunt of Mrs. Parker, who did much to reduce the expense of housekeeping,[1] while, farther on, Mrs. Parker's means were augmented by property coming from her parents.

Many of his books were bought with reference to a projected "Development of Religion" for which he read and planned extensively but wrote only two hundred and seventy manuscript pages. "Which of all my books," he once asked Colonel Higginson,[2] "do you think I have most enjoyed?" It was that Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary which he had bought with the income of his berrying: "Theodore Parker, ejus liber, 1822." He had a great liking for voluminous encyclopædias such as Bayle's, the French "Biographie Universelle," Pierer's "Universal-Lexicon," thirty-four volumes; Ersch and Gruber's "Allegemeine Encyclopädie"

[1] She would fain have given the Parkers their Boston house, of which she held a mortgage, but Mr. Parker refused the favor, and she died leaving a will which did not embody the intentions she had plainly had in mind.

[2] Whose account of Mr. Parker's library in the annual report of the Boston Public Library for 1883, "Document 103" for that year, is so good that I would gladly copy it entire, but can only, while using it freely, commend it heartily.

in one hundred and fifty volumes; and with these he had many others of their kind. Such books were eloquent of his insatiable appetite for information, an appetite which would have "mocked the meat it fed on" if the provision had been scantier than it was. Of similar character were his collections of literary history, travels, and geography. His collections in jurisprudence were very strong, and many of his writings and speeches showed his acquaintance with them to be remarkable, especially his "Defence" when indicted for the attempt to rescue Anthony Burns. Strangely enough, Parker was curious with regard to the "Occult Sciences," so called, and collected many books relating to them. His library was well stocked with histories and particularly with books and pamphlets relating to American slavery. His books are not annotated so much as we should expect they would be, but those upon American history are an exception,[1] looking to his biographies of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Webster and the younger Adams. In works of philosophy and biblical criticism the library was extremely rich. His editions of the Bible ran out into the merely curious more freely than any other part of his collection. Of these he had nearly one hundred, some of them very old and fine.

[1] Another exception is his collection of the Greek poets. Colonel Higginson quotes Mr. John G. King, of Salem, Mass., "one of the last of our old-fashioned classical scholars," as saying that "Theodore Parker was the only person he had ever encountered who could sit down with him and seriously discuss a disputed passage in a Greek play."

Much given to keeping days and feasts,[1] and always liking to mark his own birthday with a white stone of some sort, he must have been well pleased when there came to him on his forty-fourth birthday a copy of Alexander Murray's "History of the European Languages," for which he had been looking a long time. Moreover he was put upon the track of it by an advertisement in a newspaper sent him from Charleston, S. C., that he might see himself abused. He sent for the book and got it; so, like the wounded oyster, as Emerson has written, mending his shell with pearl.

Mr. Parker's learning, while it was far from being exhaustive of his 13,000 books, was fairly representative of them. He was deep read in them, and, as a whole, they qualified his mind with their contents. He was a voracious reader, and his intellectual digestion was both sound and serviceable, resolving what he read into the substance of his mind. This means much more than that his memory was marvelously retentive. But this, also, is true. It was not infallible, but, "if he was sometimes inaccurate," says Colonel Higginson, "he was so with that inevitable percentage of this drawback which always accompanies a vast memory." His inaccuracies,[2] relatively to the know-

[1] His prefaces generally bear the date of some memorable anniversary: that of the Webster sermon, March 7, 1853, the third anniversary of Webster's "Seventh of March Speech;" the De Wette *Introduction*, August 24, 1843; the *Ten Sermons*, August 24, 1852; the *Experience as a Minister*, April 19, 1859, etc., etc.

[2] Learning of all kinds is a perpetual flux; critical learning

ledge of the ordinary well-read clergyman would have been "a cypher with the rim removed." He read so rapidly that the process appears as one of absorption rather than deliberate attention. Of instances of his mnemonic brilliancy there is no lack. Colonel Higginson relates that wishing to find something in Calhoun's works, he was sent at once by Parker to the place, Parker at the same time reciting from the first volume the table of contents, which he had not seen for twenty years. At another time Colonel Higginson went to Chief Justice Shaw, Justice Gray, and Charles Sumner for something touching upon slavery in the Salic, Burgundian, and Ripuarian codes before Charlemagne's codification. None of these could help, but Sumner said, "Try Parker." Higginson did, and Parker said, "Go to the Harvard College Library and on the fifth shelf in the fourth left-hand alcove you will find a small thick quarto volume entitled 'Potgeiser de Statu Servorum,' which will give you all the information you want." Higginson went at once to the library and confirmed Parker's daring information.

I could easily fill up a chapter with such letters

preëminently; but Parker's modernness is a continual surprise; he was so much in advance of his time that he is often found abreast of the present. One notes his striking anticipations oftener than his serious mistakes. Of course many statements of current opinion are true no longer. Occasionally we wonder that he could be so evidently wrong, as where he makes Calvin personally superintend the burning of Servetus, — a business which he devolved on Farel, — and where he understands by the immaculate conception of Mary her miraculous birth.

as came to him seeking information as remote as that pertaining to mediæval and barbaric codes; and his answers to them, often written without looking in a book. But a single random shot will have to serve as representative of his whole scattering fire. Dr. Francis writes to inquire about the "Evangelium Æternum." Replying, Parker playfully imagines that Dr. Francis is merely trying to encourage him like a fond parent giving his little boy some easy word to spell, and goes on: —

Know then, most erudite Professor, that you will find an account of this book in Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., Book III., Part II., chap. ii., secs. 28, 33, and 34. In the notes to Murdock's Version (note 2, pp. 6–9) you will find references to the literature. Fleury also gives an account of the book: H. E. Tom. XII., Liv. LXXXIV., sec. 35, *et al.* Some attribute it to John of Parma (*sed male*); Mosheim thinks it was falsely ascribed to Joachim (*sed pessime*); while Grätze (Lehrbuch Allg. Literargeschichte aller bekannter Völker der Welt, von der ältesten bis auf die neueste Zeit. II. Band II. 2 Abthlg. 1te Hälfte, p. 25) thinks it certain that nobody wrote the book but Joachim himself. However the "Introductorius" has the wickedest part of the matter — sin lying before the door — and that was written by I don't know whom; but I suppose Engelhardt has settled this matter in his Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen, for he has a tract, Der abt Joachim und das Ewige Evangelium, in which you will find all about it — and everything else. Besides this, Fabricius has something about Joachim in his Bib. Med., etc. Lat., and that very *rare* author, Gieseler (Ch. Hist. II., p. 301) has two notes about the book.

The moral quality of his many letters of this kind is more impressive than the intellectual. Beautiful was the patience with which he lent himself to others' uses; answering fools even, for the most part, not according to their folly but with the utmost gentleness. That his scholarship was more exhaustive and robust than it was nice and delicate, would very likely be the judgment of his peers. It is certain that his general knowledge was far more remarkable than the library with which he strengthened it from year to year, though, among private libraries, this had not an equal in Boston except Mr. George Ticknor's, which had a much more special character.

In a certain sense it was the tragedy of Parker's life that he produced nothing as a literary monument adequate to the prodigality of the materials which he amassed. These were enough for a cathedral pile of grand proportions, but the cathedral was never built. The "Development of Religion," if it had been written, would have left more stones in the way than could have gone into its masonry. A "History of Civilization" would have been more exigent and hence more adequate. But Theodore Parker, as the writer of such a book, would have spoiled two better men: Theodore Parker "the great American preacher," as he is justly named upon his monument in Florence, and Theodore Parker the great ally — one of the greatest — of Garrison and Lincoln in the emancipation of four million slaves. To these two great parts he could

not have added that of creative scholarship without marring all.

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail.

No man ever found his proper place more absolutely than he. Had he been only the great preacher we should have had no reason to complain, or had he been only the anti-slavery reformer. That he was both at once was fortune singularly good. Meantime his wealth of learning did not run to utter waste. It bought for us some special things of real significance; chief among these, his translation of De Wette's "Introduction." But its best service was to enrich whatever work he did with copious and effective illustration, yet without anything of pedantic pride or loss of natural simplicity. It made for the enlargement of his mind. It set the world in his heart. It was the exponent of his big humanity and fed it with unfailing streams.

He did not overvalue De Wette's "Introduction to the Old Testament" at the time he was engaged upon it. It was then, as he said, "the most learned, the most exact, the most critical Introduction to the Old Testament ever made in any tongue." Considered dangerously radical in 1843, it now seems conservative and even antiquated; thin, also, in comparison with the best later Introductions. The principal points at which it broke with the traditional conceptions were the late origin of Deuteronomy (620 B. C.) the post-exilic date of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. and the Maccabæan date of Daniel. Here are the three first letters of an alphabet which since has

been much lengthened out. How innocent they seem, compared with Cheyne's disintegration of Isaiah into some twenty parts and his insistence that all the Psalms are post-exilic. As here, so everywhere. So conservative a critic as Driver follows Kuenen and Wellhausen in their assignment of the priestly portions of the Hexateuch to the fifth and later centuries B. C. It is an amusing paradox that Mr. Andrews Norton's "Note on the Pentateuch," which made its first appearance in vol. ii. of his "Genuineness of the Gospels" in 1844, the year after Parker's "De Wette," was more prophetic than that of later studies and results. Mr. Norton was a belated Marcion in his dislike of the Old Testament, and his dogmatic predilections made it easy for him to accept some now obvious but then startling conclusions. His sense of humor must have been inverted, or he could not have been so angry with Parker and others for treating the New Testament much more respectfully than he treated the Old.[1]

[1] Mr. Norton's *Note* is one of the most amusing curiosities of biblical literature. It was republished in England in 1863 with an introduction by John James Tayler, whose careful statement of Mr. Norton's position is, "that the whole of man's religious convictions and trusts depends entirely on the miraculously attested mission of Jesus Christ." He conceded the divine origin of Judaism, but only as a background for Christianity to be painted in upon. But "in order to render it evident that Moses was from God it may be necessary to prove that the books which profess to contain a history of his ministry were not written by him and do not contain an authentic account of it." This depreciation of the Pentateuch is extended to other parts of the Old Testament, Mr. Norton's admiration for which was not equal to that of many modern critics whose radicalism is pronounced.

Parker translated "De Wette" word for word, making such changes as were demanded by the new German editions that appeared between 1836, when he began the work, and 1843, when he completed it. He read all the previous introductions, and so much of the early Fathers as bore upon the matter, and all the modern criticisms bearing on it that promised anything important. He added many passages designed to make the book as clear for the general reader as De Wette has made it for the learned few. He translated all the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew passages that De Wette had left in their original form, while this also was retained. Some of his additions were elaborate; those upon Daniel were particularly so.

The book was not a pecuniary success. It cost him $2000 to stereotype it, and in 1858 he had got but $775 back. But he did not regret the labor or expense: "If I were to live my life over again I would do the same. I meant it for a labor of love." But those for whom he meant it feared him, bringing such a gift. His heresy infected it with a fearsome taint. Good men had advised the publishers not to publish his books. If they would publish them, the good men could refrain from buying them; and this they did. It was not the kind of book for a suspected man to publish; not one of "the thirty *sous* books" in which Voltaire believed. Parker would have done better had he assimilated "De Wette" and the whole literature of the subject, and then written a popular

introduction. This he meant to do some time, but other and more pressing duties made it impossible. It was a task which could afford to wait for other hands. So could not the task which he found pressed upon him with an insistence and authority that were not to be denied.

## CHAPTER VII

### PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

By laying violent hands upon itself the Thursday lecture pretty effectually closed the second Unitarian controversy, — that of Theodore Parker with the Boston Unitarians. At least that controversy passed about this time (1845) from an acute into a chronic stage. Henceforth Mr. Parker absented himself from the meetings of the Boston Association, and, with a few exceptions, had no professional fellowship with the neighboring clergy. The parting words on his side were those of a "Letter to the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers, touching Certain Matters of their Theology." It reviewed the situation and concluded with a list of four major and twenty-four minor questions. The major questions asked for definitions of the terms Salvation, Miracle, Inspiration, Revelation. The minor questions were amplifications of the major ones. All were intended to bring out the fact that the Association stood for no definite body of belief, but was deeply implicated in the heresies of the brother who plied his Socratic method with such demoralizing ingenuity. The date of this letter was March 20,

1845, and the "Examiner"[1] of the same month contained an article by Dr. Gannett reviewing eight pamphlets contributed to the controversy. One should read this article if he would see the conservative statement putting its best foot forward. It is a model of controversial writing, and Mr. Parker could not have desired a more frank and kindly criticism of his works and ways. His belief of "the Christian truths" was cheerfully conceded; also his Christian character; but he was not "a Christian believer" because he did not accept the truths of Christianity as supernaturally taught: "According to the theory which Mr. Parker advocates the words of Christ derive little authority from the fact of his having spoken them; they are to be believed not because they are his words, but because they are absolute truth." The modern reader will say, Surely here was exaltation and not degradation; but *then* the sensual miracle was more than the spiritual truth.[2] There was some criticism of the way in which Mr. Parker handled sacred matters. Here evidently was a prime source of trouble. Sacred matters had had a vocabulary of their own. Channing and Buck-

[1] By the *Examiner* the *Christian Examiner* is meant here and elsewhere. It began its course in 1824 and finished it in 1869. It was a lineal successor of the *Christian Disciple* (1813–24), the *General Repository* (1812–13), and the *Monthly Anthology* (1803–11). Considering the periods covered, the amount of controversial matter in all these magazines was very small: for a section of twenty years less than one article a year.

[2] More as recommending the truth as of divine origin and establishing its Christian character.

minster had dared to give them literary form. Parker spontaneously translated them into the common speech of men, hoping to make them better understood. The effect was often shocking to his contemporaries, for whom every holy spade must have its euphuistic name. Emerson summed up the state religion of England in five words, "By taste ye are saved." Dr. Bellows said, "Tastes separate more than opinions." And Parker's taste was not infallible. In general his homely secular utterance was a step forward — a stride. But he was sometimes painfully unhappy in his choice of words and illustrations.

Having stated the case, Dr. Gannett asked, "What then shall we do?" and answered that there must be no anger or abuse. The impregnable bulwarks of Christianity must not be defended by covering them with inflammatory placards. But the new doctrines must be shown to be unsound, unscriptural, and mischievous. The conservative mind must have found his doing of this quite satisfactory. His thinking on the subject of intuition was closer than Mr. Parker's own. But what should be done with the heretic?

> Shall he be persecuted? No. Calumniated? No. Put down? No; if by this phrase be signified the use of any but fair and gentle means of curtailing his influence. Shall he be silenced, or be tolerated? Not tolerated, for the exercise of toleration implies the right to restrain the expression of opinion by force, but the validity of such a right cannot be admitted in this coun-

try and should not be allowed in the Christian church. Nor silenced; unless open argument and fraternal persuasion may reduce him to silence. But on the other hand he should not be encouraged nor assisted in diffusing his opinions by those who differ from him in regard to their correctness.

For such to exchange pulpits with him would be for them to encourage and assist him. Therefore they must not do this. This does not seem unfair.[1] A man's pulpit is his castle, into which he should not lightly welcome any one who he thinks will trifle with the magazine. But the exchange of pulpits was in 1845 the accepted sign of ministerial fellowship. To generally deny it to Mr. Parker was to resort to "the exclusive policy" of the Trinitarians thirty years before. It was to say, "Independence forever! But if you exercise

[1] For those differing from him. For those agreeing with him it was different, though these, while agreeing with his matter, might have objected to his manner. Parker, in his demand for perfect liberty of free inquiry and free utterance, was faithful to the most explicit and most prominent emphasis of the older Unitarians; who tacitly assumed that their scheme of supernatural Christianity was wholly rational. But for this assumption the demand from 1815 to 1830 for complete intellectual liberty would not have been so simple and unwavering. There was no injustice or unfairness in making their implicit assumption explicit. They had not meant to follow Free Inquiry so far as to admit that Christianity might be a natural religion. Therefore, says W. C. Gannett, they did right to disclaim Parker. Yes, if, so doing, they had frankly abandoned their principle of free inquiry as one to the exigency of which they were unequal. Yes, if they had frankly confessed that principle to be subordinate to the affirmation of the necessity for miraculous support of Christian truth. But these things they did not do.

your independence you are to us a heathen man and a publican." Dr. Gannett took issue with those who required "that he be cast out from the professional sympathies of those with whom he had been associated, and that a rebuke be administered to him by some formal act of the denomination." The majority agreed with Dr. Gannett. At the Association meeting which considered Mr. Parker's expulsion, there were but two votes for it. Why sacrifice the jewel of consistency when there had already been discovered a more excellent way?

But it is high time for us to be considering in some more definite manner than heretofore the general scope of Parker's philosophical and theological opinions. These were of less importance to his peculiar work than they have been generally esteemed, while yet they were of very great importance. It was neither as a philosopher nor as a theologian that he was most significant, but there was no schism in his personality, and between his philosophy, his theology, his politics and his religion there was continual ebb and flow. The interaction was habitual and complete. And the action of his philosophical opinions on his theological opinions and religious life and action was extremely vivid and intense. But while we may agree with Mr. Frothingham that "with a different philosophy he would have been a different man," it is quite as true that if he had been a different man he would have had a different philosophy. Mr. Frothingham is persuaded that "his

great power as a preacher was due in chief part to the earnestness of his faith in the transcendental philosophy." But that philosophy as he held it took

> the shape,
> With fold on fold, of mountain or of cape,

of his own spiritual topography. The personal equation was the greater part. The doctrine had the features of his mind. We should make a great mistake if we went to Kant or Fichte or Schelling or Hegel for a right view of Transcendentalism and then proceeded to assume that Parker's was the same. We should not go so far astray if we went to Jacobi for the plan of Parker's thought. For Jacobi taught that God, the Soul, and Free Will were intuitive beliefs of the mind and had the same validity as Time, Space, and the External World as postulated by the demands of sensuous perception. Here certainly was a very close resemblance to Parker's transcendental consciousness of God, Immortality, and the Moral Law, but the resemblance was probably much more a matter of coincidence than a matter of sequence. Moreover the positiveness of Jacobi's tone was unique among the German Transcendentalists. Kant said, It is not in me; and Fichte, It is not in me. Schelling passed him by contumeliously on the other side. The essential principle of Transcendentalism — that there are elements in knowledge which transcend experience — this was common to all the members of the group and Parker shared it

with them. But, for all their common ground, their differences among themselves were very great, as were Parker's also from each of them, not even Jacobi excepted.

The difference was incalculable between his view and that of Kant — the Moral Law given in consciousness, while God and Immortality are posited as intellectual forms, convenient for its operation, and for the ultimate reward of right doing. Even more repulsive to him must have been Fichte's towering idealism, with no God but his own moral consciousness, while Time and Space and Matter were but projections of the individual mind. Schelling, even in his earlier and more sober stage, must have considered much too curiously for him, so eager was his craving for simplicity. It is strange that Schelling's monism of an Absolute Being phenomenalized in Mind and Matter did not attract him more, and that he preferred thinking of matter as "a datum objective to God," but God himself the giver. Parker cared little for Philosophy except as the handmaid of Religion, and consequently he had little use for Hegel with a Becoming for his God, a God gradually developing and arriving at self-consciousness in man.

There were more points of contact between Parker's philosophy and that of the French Eclectics, Cousin, Constant, and Jouffroy, and the English Germanists, Carlyle and Coleridge, than between it and any German system except Jacobi's; but as compared with these also he was "to his native

centre fast." He was not less self-poised as related to his American contemporaries. He has been often characterized as a concreter Emerson, but his Transcendentalism and Emerson's were cast in very different moulds. Emerson's, in fact, was not cast in any. It was a stream of tendency. His intuitions were a more feeble folk than Parker's sturdy affirmations of God, the Moral Law, and Immortality as directly known. His biographer, Mr. Cabot, says: "His reverence for intuitions and his distrust of reasoning were only the preference of truth over past apprehension of the truth." Parker was troubled by his incoherency, but Emerson saw more "in part" than Parker, who lived so "resolvedly in the whole." Parker's genius was not metaphysical. Emerson's was much more so; Alcott's far more; so Ripley's, Hedge's, Brownson's, each in turn. There were men who came after him, Samuel Johnson and David Atwood Wasson, who are to be preferred before him as exponents of the Transcendentalist philosophy. There never was a more English mind than Parker's, and because it was so English, it was not metaphysical. Coleridge flouted the understanding, and Parker inclined to his disparagement, but a capacious understanding was his most characteristic intellectual gift. The ease — if I should not say the inevitableness — with which he lapsed from "the high *priori* road" to the plodding footpath of scientific induction is significant of this. His passion for facts, his stomach for statistics,

was fundamental to his mind. Buckle's delight in statistics was not more keen. His journal has great piles of them, ranging all the way from West India rum to the Egyptian dynasties. Not infrequently we find him inductive in the very act of stating his position as a Transcendentalist. For example: —

> Then Transcendentalism uses the other mode, the *a posteriori* . . . [In its argument for God] it finds signs and proofs of him everywhere, and gains evidence of God's existence in the limits of sensational experience. . . . At the ends of my arms are two major prophets, ten minor prophets, each of them pointing the Transcendental philosopher to the infinite God of which he has consciousness without the logical process of induction.

We have this same Transcendentalism with an inductive attachment in the following expression:

> Transcendentalism has a work to do, to show that physics, politics, ethics, religion, rest on facts of necessity, *and have their witness and confirmation in facts of observation.*

Apart from this confusion, whereby Transcendentalism is set to do the drudgery of Science, Parker never is disdainful of the aid and comfort which is brought by Science to the transcendental intuitions. Variations of Paley's argument from design appear frequently in his discussions, and make up the bulk of them. But Transcendentalism furnished him with an admirable formula of his personal religion, and the formula reacted on

the religion in the happiest manner. He would have been shorn of much of his public strength if he could have offered his glorious trinity of God, Immortality, and the Moral Law as merely the data of his own private faith. To offer them as truths of human nature and the human mind, as such, was quite another matter. Professor Dowden, writing of "Julius Cæsar," suggests that Shakespeare means "to signify to us unobtrusively that the philosophical creed which a man professes grows out of his character and circumstances so far as it is really a portion of his own being; and that so far as it is received by the intellect in the calm of life from teachers and schools, such a philosophical creed does not adhere very closely to the soul of a man, and may, upon the pressure of events or passions, be cast aside." It was because Parker's Transcendentalism grew out of his character that it was so vital. But because the soul's form does not always, or often, shape the body of the philosophic creed, his inferences from creed to character were liable to possible mistake.

Were it so sure, as many think, that the pendulum of thought has swung back from intuitionalism to sensationalism in these last years, the intuitionalism of Parker and his contemporaries would not be thereby dishonored. It was a valid protest against the sensationalism of their time, and if the sensationalism of the present time has better standing, it is, in good part, because the transcendental criticism upon it has been taken well to heart. In

Parker's time it was generally assumed that materialists could not be idealists in spite of Berkeley's important evidence to the contrary, in his own person, which evidence did not escape Parker's scrutiny. In our own time Science is as idealistic as Metaphysics.[1] "'What is matter?' 'Never mind,'" was formerly a good joke. It is very pointless now, seeing that matter, as we know it, is "mind-stuff" for the most part. Moreover, the pendulum has swung back not a little from the sensational side. Thomas Hill Green, the two Cairds, Bosanquet, Ritchie, Henry Jones, Bradley, Alexander, Wallace, Watson, Royce, all sitting rather loose to Hegel, but nothing if not metaphysical, have ridden well and brought important news. The persuasion is gathering strength that Science at her best can only write a Book of Exodus; that the Book of Genesis is a book of metaphysics. In the meantime Experientialism has enlarged its borders. Sensationalism does not now exhaust it as it did formerly.[2] Mind is seen to be a fact which also is somewhat, and the attempt to construct a rational conception of the universe from the world below man is felt to be a palpable absurdity.

It was so much Parker's habit to set his special lesson in a frame of general ideas that we have many statements of his philosophical position.

[1] See Huxley's "Bishop Berkeley on the Metaphysics of Sensation," in *Critiques and Addresses.*

[2] In Professor Royce's exposition it includes Metaphysics. See his *The World and the Individual*, p. 259.

With much general resemblance, one notes a certain latitude and looseness of expression. He did not use philosophical language with a nice exactness. His most elaborate statement is contained in "Transcendentalism," a lecture written about 1850, and first published in 1876 by the Free Religious Association. It covers about forty pages, and twenty-five of these are exhausted by an arraignment of the Sensational School. Probably it would not have been accepted as a true bill by any reverent disciple of Locke, and certainly it is not a fair account of Sensationalism in its evolutionary form, which was just beginning to emerge when Parker died. One cannot help wondering whether he would have made any terms with this, if it had come in time for him to reckon with it. Would he have recognized any validity in the claim that certain truths are necessary, not because we *can*, but because we *cannot* transcend experience? — being irresistibly persuaded that the thing which always has been, always will be.

In the tractate, "Transcendentalism," he criticises Sensationalism under the heads of Physics, Politics, Ethics, and Religion; judging the tree by its fruits. This was a favorite way with him. It reflected his personal experience. His philosophical ideas had profound reality for him; they were a constant inspiration to his moral life. He assumed that it was so with others, and so drew out from the sensational philosophy what seemed to be its logical consequences with unsparing hand.

Could any good come out of that poor Nazareth? Not much, he thought; but there were individual sensationalists who should have given him pause: Voltaire with his passionate humanity; Franklin with his sturdy sense of political rights and duties and his large benevolence; and many besides these. If he had lived a little longer he would have found Carlyle, the Transcendentalist, blind as a bat to the merits of our American struggle, and John Stuart Mill, the Sensationalist, as clear-eyed to them as Garrison. But Parker had a postern by which to escape from these practical difficulties: The Sensationalists did not know their own minds; they were half Transcendentalists and more, without knowing it.

Coming to the religious application he was fortified by his first-hand knowledge of the Unitarian and other orthodoxy of his time, the alliance of which with the sensational philosophy was palpably in evidence. It was of the very essence of sensational materialism to prefer a physical miracle as the evidence of Christian truth to the truth as its own evidence. In his "Foundations of Belief" Mr. Arthur Balfour has exhibited Christian supernaturalism as one of the grossest forms of Naturalism, that being his word for what Parker called Sensationalism, choosing the better term.

As with Sensationalism, so with Transcendentalism: Parker spends little time on its primary concepts, much on its logical outcome. It is defined as the doctrine

that man has faculties which transcend the senses; faculties which give him ideas and intuitions that transcend sensational experience; ideas whose origin is not in sensation nor their proof from sensation; that the mind (meaning thereby all that is not sense) is not a smooth tablet on which sensation writes its experience, but is a living principle which of itself originates ideas when the senses present the occasion; that, as there is a body with certain senses, so there is a soul or mind with certain powers which give the man sentiments and ideas. . . . It [the transcendental school] maintains that it is a fact of consciousness that there is in the intellect somewhat that was not first in the senses; and also that they have analyzed consciousness and *by the inductive method* [*sic*] established the conclusion that there is a consciousness that never was sensation, never could be; that our knowledge is in part *a priori;* that we know, 1, certain truths of necessity; 2, certain truths of intuition, or spontaneous consciousness; certain truths of demonstration, a voluntary consciousness; all of these truths not dependent on sensation for cause, origin, or proof.

This summoning of Caliban, — the Understanding, according to Lowell, — to prove his own incompetency, is only one of many helps that Prospero (the Transcendental Reason) gets from him in Parker's scheme. Our evolutionary psychology affects this matter sensibly. Even with Parker the intellect was not a constant, and it was not mind *as mind*, but mind acting under the most favorable conditions, that did all the fine things transcending sense and reflection. But if mind is an evolutionary product, its original capacity must

have been slight as compared with the most ordinary modern mind, and we are interested to know when it began to have its transcendental powers. Intellect, as an evolutionary refinement of sense-perception, hints at the possible evolution of the transcendental from the inductive intellect. Assured of this, a radical distinction in the nature of the two would be improbable. In any case there must be Mind involved in the first stage of the ascending series or there could be none in the last. Evolution of a higher from a lower, except in virtue of an antecedent higher, is not to be conceived.

I shall be less likely to do Parker injustice if I let him speak for himself. He describes Transcendentalism in Physics, Politics, Ethics, and Religion.

> In Physics it starts with the maxim that the senses acquaint us actually with body and therefrom the mind gives us the idea of substance answering to an objective reality. Thus is the certainty of the material world made sure of. Then *a priori* it admits the uniformity of action in nature; and its laws are known to be universal and not general alone.

Evidently the doctrine here has more the concreteness of Parker's mind than the warrant of the German schools. He admits the evils that have come from drawing out a system of Nature from the transcendental "nature of things" and specifies the blunders of Schelling. Those of Hegel were more utterly absurd. The haste with

which Parker passes directly from Physics to Politics is eloquent of where his treasure was and his heart also. Transcendental Politics

does not so much quote precedents, contingent facts of experience, as ideas, necessary facts of consciousness. It only quotes the precedent to illustrate the idea. It appeals to a natural justice, natural right; absolute justice, absolute right. Now the source and original of this justice and right it finds in God — the conscience of God; the channel through which we receive this justice and right is our own moral sense, our conscience; which is our consciousness of the conscience of God.

In Ethics Transcendentalism affirms that man has moral faculties which lead him to justice and right and by his own nature can find out what is right and just and can know it and be certain of it. Right is to be done come what will come. . . . While experience shows what has been or is, conscience shows what should be or shall. Transcendental ethics looks not to the consequence of virtue in this life or the next to lead men to virtue. That is itself a good, an absolute good, to be loved not for what it brings but is.

Practically the lessons of experience meant much more for Parker than in this depreciation. He used them with tremendous force to marshal men the way that they should go. Coming to Religion, he says: —

Transcendentalism admits a religious faculty, element, or nature in man [a wide range in the choice of terms] as it admits a moral, intellectual and sensational faculty. . . . Through this we have consciousness of God as through the senses consciousness of matter. . . .

The idea of God is a fact given in the consciousness of man: consciousness of the infinite is the condition of a consciousness of the finite; . . . for if I am, and am finite and dependent, then this presupposes the infinite and independent.

In all this we seem to miss the quality which distinguishes the metaphysical as a peculiar type of thought, and see why Martineau and others have not conceded to Parker metaphysical ability. What his philosophy actually signified was his abounding confidence in the realities of the moral and religious life. The sensational system repelled him because it set the senses higher than the soul and endeavored to recommend spiritual truths to him by physical marvels. He erected into a system of philosophic certainty his inborn and inbred faith in God, Immortality, and Conscience. It had a certain formal resemblance to other transcendental systems of his time, but the personal equation in it was immense and all important. His mother's part in it was much greater than Kant's or Schelling's. Its simplicity constituted for him one of its greatest attractions, so manifestly did that simplicity make it apprehensible to the great majority of people whom Parker wished to influence and impress with his ideas. Few have had his robust capacity for belief in the great things of religion. Hardly could he imagine other men as having less. It taxed his ingenuity to reconcile particular disbelief in God or Immortality with universal consciousness of these. But what a

coign of vantage was the persuasion of that consciousness in others and in his own lofty mind! It is not strange that thousands heard him gladly. It is strange that every thousand was not ten. For men could not resist the high contagion of a faith so pure and bold. They could not but believe themselves entitled to his absolute confidence in God and Man and God's Voice in Man's Heart.

The higher ranges of Parker's philosophy and theology run up into one central peak of which we get many different views as we follow him from one book or sermon to another. It is hard to choose out of the many. If we let him decide we shall go for the best statement of his theology to his "Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology" (1853). He begins by painting-in a sombre background, the commingling gloom of two sermons on Speculative and Practical Atheism and two others on the Speculative and Practical Working of the Popular Theology. He found the amount of real atheism much less than the apparent. Given belief in Nature as the cause of its own existence, the Mind of the Universe and the Providence thereof, and the denial of God is only formal and not real: "The name is of the smallest consequence. All those men that I know, who call themselves atheists, really admit the existence of all the qualities I speak of." "The real Speculative Atheist denies the existence of the qualities of God; denies that there is any Mind in the Universe, any self-conscious Providence, any Providence at all."

He then proceeds to work out the subjective effects of this theory as a theory of the world of matter, as a theory of individual life, and as a theory of the life of mankind.

The most orthodox of Parker's contemporaries did not believe in theology more completely than he did, or in the influence which it exerts on human life. Ideas of all kinds were for him the great human forces. He could make the individual exception, but that did not swerve him from his faith in the general operation of ideas, good and ill, upon the social mass; and he never tired of drawing out the subjective and objective effects of the ideas he revered and those which he abhorred. He drew out with great force the logical results of real atheism upon men's thought of Nature and the individual and social life. Then he turned to "Practical Atheism, regarded as a Principle of Ethics," and showed how a man would act who should translate the terms of a real speculative atheism into the terms of individual and social life. The applications to domestic life and politics were very close indeed. The power of these sermons was in their entire sincerity. The preacher did not endeavor to excite a horror which he did not feel. Atheism, speculative and practical, was for him something so monstrous that his command of language, which was great, was inadequate to express all that he felt. The strong-built sentences stagger under a burden of imaginative misery that is too great for them to bear.

In the popular theology he finds five great truths: "the existence of God, the immortality of man, the moral obligation of man to obey the law of God, the connection between God and man" [inspiration, prayer], and the connection of love between man and man." He says, "These are, I think, by far the most important speculative doctrines known to the human intellect." But he does not dwell on them. He passes to the "great defects" of the system, its finite and imperfect God, selfish and cruel, while the Devil, "the unacknowledged but most effective fourth person in the Godhead," is "stronger than God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all united." "The doctrine concerning Man is no better." The particulars need not be repeated. They are those of every well authenticated exposition of the traditional theology. The doctrines of original sin, total depravity, election, atonement, eternal hell, are painted in colors to which black is rosy red. Summing up, he said, —

> God is not represented as a friend, but as the worst foe to men; existence is a curse to all but one of a hundred thousand; immortality is a curse to ninety-nine out of every hundred thousand on earth; religion is a blessing to only ten in a million; to all the rest a torment on earth, and in hell.

As between no God at all and "a God who is Almighty but omnipotently malignant," and "a universe which is itself an odious and inexorable hell," he did not hesitate to choose. Let it by all

means be no God. Those who thought he had done his worst for the popular theology came again the next Sunday to find that he had not. The subject was "The Popular Theology of Christendom regarded as a principle of Ethics." The text was, "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." His purpose was to set forth the logical effects of such a system and he did it well. He was a master in this kind. He exhibited these effects as corrupting the Feelings, the Intellect, the Practical Life, not only logically but actually. It was an exhibition to make one's whole head sick, one's whole heart faint.

No account of Parker's preaching can be complete that does not make due mention of his terrible denunciations of the popular theology. These fixed his standing in the orthodox imagination of his time. Their proportion to the sum total of his preaching has been much misunderstood. They frequently recurred, but seldom in such mass as in the sermons now under consideration; oftener as incidental strokes. Much oftener he dwelt upon the dignity and glory of that higher faith to which he had attained. It is above all things necessary that, in our estimate of such preaching, we should consider the important theological changes which have taken place within the last half century. We read these awful indictments and we say, "Nobody believes such things now." This is not true, and we are much too apt to impute the liberality of some to all. Moreover they are explicit or implicit in the creeds which the churches stiffly decline to

change ever so little. But it is true that there are now hundreds of books written by men snugly ensconced in one orthodox connection or another who repudiate Calvinism as passionately as did Theodore Parker; there are hundreds of preachers standing in orthodox pulpits, with no one to molest or make them afraid, while they make substantially his damning accusations. One of these, Dr. A. W. Momerie, declares, "The orthodox idea of God is the most horrible idea that it is possible for the imagination to conceive;" and Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke, loaded with Presbyterian honors, says of the God once reverenced, "To worship such a God would be to worship an omnipotent devil," "a nightmare horror of monstrosity, infinitely worse than no God at all." Such examples might easily be multiplied a hundredfold. Had orthodoxy been in Parker's time the painted flame which it is now in many pulpits, he would have dealt with it less vehemently, though he might well have demanded a more nice conformity between the accepted creed and the habitual speech. It was because the God of his apprehension was infinite in every possible perfection that he resented with hot indignation the horrible caricatures and slanders of the popular theology. He had given them a fair trial in his young manhood in Lyman Beecher's Hanover Street Church, and he hated them with a perfect hatred for men's sake as much as God's.

He was at little pains, however, to measure orthodoxy by the emphasis that was laid upon its

better parts, or by the moral ideals that were involved both in its more popular representations and its more refined interpretations. It is what men love that makes them good or bad, and not many loved the God fashioned in the furnace-heat of Edwards's pitiless imagination, or hewn by Calvin's frozen steel. It is not a theology as a species which is most significant, but its variations that are selected by the common sense and good will of the majority. If we find scant recognition of this fact in Parker's preaching it is still likely that his means were well adapted to the end he had in view.

Having painted-in his sombre background with remorseless hand, he proceeded to dash in against it five sermons of heroic size, the first "Speculative Theism regarded as a Theory of the Universe." He distinguished Theism not only from Atheism and the Popular Theology, but also from Deism, which affirms a moral God, "but still starts from the sensational philosophy, abuts in materialism, and so gets its idea of God solely from external observation and not at all from consciousness, and, accordingly, represents God as finite and imperfect." At this point his readers are referred back to former statements of his fundamental theology. These, as found in the "Discourse," start from *the sense of dependence* which seems to have been Schleiermacher's contribution. This is the *sentiment* of God, of the Infinite, the vague *henotheism* on which Dr. Max Müller has insisted a

good deal. Besides this we have the *idea* of God as infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness. This idea is given in consciousness, and is "the logical condition of all other ideas," and yet, inconsistently thinks Martineau, is "afterwards fundamentally and logically established by the *a priori* argument." The conception of God is something less simple than the idea, but as Parker sometimes apparently confounds the sentiment and the idea, so, again, he sometimes apparently confounds the idea and the conception.[1] God as infinite must have all possible perfections, — "the perfection of being, self-existence, eternity of duration, endless and without beginning; of power, all-mightiness; of mind, all-knowingness; of conscience, all-righteousness; of affection, all-lovingness; of soul, all-holiness, absolute fidelity to himself."[2] Being perfect in himself, everything that proceeds from him must be perfect, the universe adequate for its uses; man adequate for his functions. There seems to be no apprehension that in passing out into finiteness the Infinite must deliberately or perforce forego its infinite perfection, — "Life, like a dome of many-colored glass," staining "the white radiance of eternity." But in practice he sufficiently qualified the perfection of

[1] "He is too ardent to preserve self-consistency throughout the parts of a large abstract scheme; too impetuous for the fine analysis of intricate and evanescent phenomena." Martineau: *Personal and Political Essays*, p. 154.

[2] By analysis of the reflective *conception* he found in it substantially what was given in the intuitional *idea*.

all things when he came to Northern dough-faces and Southern kidnappers; to Mr. Facing Both Ways in the pulpit and Mr. Worldly Wiseman in the pew.

Denounced by many as a Pantheist, and warned by Martineau of his Pantheistic tendency, Parker was careful to distinguish his Theism from either material Pantheism, which resolves God into the material universe, or spiritual Pantheism, which resolves the material universe into God. If his doctrine of God everywhere and always immanent in matter and in man has often a Pantheistic fall, it finds its practical correction in a doctrine of God as "our Father and our Mother," which is warmly and tenderly anthropomorphic, and Martineau had little cause to fear that in his conception of God's immanence in man, *as in matter*, the divine inundation would swamp the human will. Perhaps logically it should have done so, but then God's immanence in man was not for Parker quite the same as his immanence in matter. It was the divine possibility conditioned by the organization of the individual and his deliberate faithfulness. This was his doctrine of universal inspiration, to which he recurred more frequently than to any other, and which, of all his theological doctrines, had the most religious and ethical significance.

"Of God as perfect Cause: the Infinite God must create all from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, as perfect means." —

"Next of God as perfect Providence: Creation and Providence are but modifications of the same function. Creation is momentary providence; Providence, perpetual creation." "In Nature God is the only Cause, the only Providence," but in man there is an element of freedom, yet here also God is perfect Providence. The freedom is not exclusive of the providence. "The quantity of human oscillation with all its consequences must be perfectly known to God before the creation."

Though human caprice and freedom be a contingent force, yet God knows human caprice when He makes it, knows exactly the amount of that contingent force, all its actions, movements, history, and what it will bring about. And as He is an infinitely wise, just, and loving Cause and Providence, so there can be no absolute evil or imperfection in the world of man more than in the world of matter, or in God himself.

These doubtful matters are developed with great elaboration and much effective illustration in three sermons which conclude the volume on Theism, etc. The subjects are "Providence," "The Economy of Pain," and the "Economy of Moral Error." His doctrine of Providence is so inclusive and so optimistic that it baulks at no fact, however ugly, in the natural or human world. Man's partial freedom makes a great difficulty, but it is not too great for him to grapple with and satisfactorily master, himself the judge. A half page goes to the description of an old oak-tree, broken, crooked, gnarled, and yet a microcosmos, serving many

uses, sustaining many happy lives. A score of farm-lore recollections went to the growing and the peopling of that tree. He takes it for a symbol of the world, which we judge as the lumberman judges the old oak, merely with reference to our uses.

How little do we know! A world without an alligator, or a rattlesnake, or a hyena, or a shark, would doubtless be a very imperfect world. The good God has something for each of these to do; a place for them all at His table, and a pillow for every one of them in Nature's bed.

In the discussions of Pain and Moral Error, Parker's method is mainly inductive. God being perfect, there can be no absolute harm in either, but he does not leave the matter here, and for the rest, he writes, as Mr. Frothingham has said, in the manner of a Bridgewater Treatise. Physical and moral pain are justified as warnings and deterrents, saving from worse mishaps.[1] His doctrine of sin was not evangelical, — not enough so even for James Freeman Clarke, who, preaching at the Music Hall, when Parker's preaching was all done, made certain criticisms on his teachings, to which Parker replied: —

Now a word about *sin*. It is a theological word and commonly pronounced *ngsin-n-n-n!* But I think the

[1] Professor Royce, *Problems of Good and Evil*, pp. 8, 9, treats this argument with absolute scorn, but, if it does not touch the root of evil, it is very instructive in regard to our behavior towards "the God of things as they are."

thing which ministers mean by *ngsin-n-n-n* has no more existence than *phlogiston*, which was once adopted to explain combustion. I find *sins*, i. e., *conscious violations of natural right*, but no *sin*, i. e., no conscious and intentional preference of wrong (as such) to right (as such); no condition of "enmity against God."

There follows an imaginary conversation with Deacon Wryface of the Hellfire Church, who repudiates all his special *sins*, but clings with desperate conviction to his consciousness of the general *ngsin-n-n-n* of his fallen *natur'*. "Oh, James," he continues, "I think the Christian (?) doctrine of sin is the Devil's own and I hate it — hate it utterly." Whatever he might think of sin in the abstract, no one of his generation had a clearer sense of concrete sins than he, or struck at them more powerfully. It was as if he conserved all the energy that others wasted on "the common ground of evil in human nature" to make his fight with concrete sins more indomitable and effectual.

As he worked out the practical effects of Atheism and the Popular Theology, so he works out the practical effects of Theism; man's perfect confidence in his own nature and destiny "plain as the farmer's road to mill;" the absolute love of God as the Beauty of Truth, Justice, Love, Holiness, and as the total Infinite Beauty; a perfect trust in Him as Cause and Providence; "a real joy in God, the highest joy and the highest delight of the human consciousness;" a Beauty of Soul, "a

harmonious whole of well-proportioned spiritual parts," "a continual and constant growth in all the noble qualities of man." With these subjective effects there are others, objective, but not more practical: keeping the Body's law without asceticism or excess; keeping the law of the Spirit, "giving each spiritual faculty its place in the housekeeping of the spirit;" and the true scale of spiritual values, first Intellect; next higher, Conscience; next the affections; highest of all the religious faculty, "the Soul, that seeks the infinite Being, Father and Mother of the Universe, loves Him with perfect love and serves Him with perfect trust." Theism has its domestic form, and that is pictured forth with glowing words, warm from the preacher's heart; it has its social form, which is commercial, political, and ecclesiastical, and, oh, the difference between these and the forms naturally consequent on Atheism or the Popular Theology!

There are parts of Parker's theological system which have not been considered in this survey. They will find their place in connection with other phases of his life and work. Among them are his views of prayer, and immortality. He does not lend himself graciously to condensation or abstraction, and thinking of the pages from which I have drawn out the foregoing statements, as much as possible in his own words, I am painfully aware of their inadequacy, so thin and meagre do they appear in comparison with the abounding flood of

his discourse, bearing great argosies of sumptuous illustration on its rushing tide. And yet, it is not Parker speaking as philosopher or theologian who is most at home and speaks in the most friendly voice. His formal statements are his least satisfactory performances. Happily these are frequently invaded by his religious genius and by this invasion made as much more beautiful as is the body's framework by its investiture of gleaming flesh. His theology, almost equally with his philosophy, was an heroic but not quite successful endeavor to render his spontaneous religiousness in such terms of the intellect as would enable him to communicate to others that which was to him so wonderfully sweet. Not that he would have dominion over their faith, but that he would be a helper of their joy.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RELIGIOUS LEADER

It having been resolved, January 22, 1845, "that Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston," on the 16th of February he began to preach in the Melodeon and continued preaching there until 1852. The great sermon on Webster was one of the last preached there, October 31st. It should have had the Music Hall for the multitudes who came to hear. The Melodeon was not an attractive house of worship. In his last sermon there, November 14th, Parker described its character: —

We must bid farewell to these old walls. They have not been very comfortable. All the elements have been hostile. The winter's cold has chilled us; the summer's heat has burned us; the air has been poisoned with contaminations, a whole week long in collecting; and the element of earth, the dirt, that was everywhere. As I have stood here, I have often seen the spangles of opera dancers, who beguiled the previous night, lying on the floor beside me. . . . The associations commonly connected with this hall have not been of the most agreeable character. Dancing monkeys and "Ethiopian serenaders," making vulgar merriment out of the ignorance and wretchedness of the American slave, have occupied this

spot during the week, and left their marks, their instruments, and their breath behind them on Sunday. Could we complain of such things? I have often thought we were well provided for, and have given God thanks for these old but spacious walls. The early Christians worshiped in caverns of the ground. In the tombs of dead men did the only live religion find its dwelling-place in Rome. . . .

This passage is significant of the fact that after seven years of this experience Theodore Parker still kept unspoiled the instincts of the New England minister, his love for all the homely decencies of New England worship. It was "Paradise for hell," during his first Boston year, to get back "home," as he called it, in the afternoon, to the West Roxbury meeting-house, where he continued preaching until January, 1846. No. 413 was his last sermon there, and, against its number and title in his index, he wrote, "Here sorrowfully I end my connection with the parish in West Roxbury. Alas, me!" There were many things in the new order that jarred upon his sensibility, but when it troubled him to have people reading their newspapers before service, and he told them so, his heart misgave him, remembering how precious to him had been a half-hour's reading in his youth. When at last there were 7000 (!) names upon his parish register, they were burdensome to him because he would fain have been a pastor to them all, as to the sixty families in West Roxbury. That he could not be, yet, to the limits of his ca-

pacity and beyond, he kept up the fine old pastoral tradition which was in his blood and bones.

The first Sunday in Boston was cold, dark, and rainy and the streets were full of sodden snow, but there was no lack of eager listeners to the sermon which had one of those titles which he liked to formulate, "The Indispensableness of True Religion for Man's Welfare in his Individual and Social Life." His last Boston sermon was on the same subject, though with a briefer title, "What Religion may do for a Man," and all the sermons of the fourteen intervening years were variations of the initial theme. The success of the enterprise exceeded Parker's hope and that of his more sanguine friends. A congregation, filling the dingy hall, flocked to him from all parts of the city and from the suburban towns. Very soon it took on the character which, once established, it maintained throughout the period allotted him, so tragically brief. Not many of the rulers and the Pharisees believed on him, but with an erratic photosphere of iconoclasts and fanatics and Adullamites, there was a central mass of character equal to the best that Boston Unitarianism could afford, with an amount of intellectual independence and engagement in social enterprises of great pith and moment not to be found elsewhere. Any enumeration would be imperfect and unjust. But may I not adorn my page with a few names to which many could be added, of equal if not greater weight than some of these? What a noble company was

that which included such men as John R. Manley, Charles Ellis, Robert E. Apthorp, Parker's "beloved John," — my own good friend John Ayres, who had an equal passion for gardening and for the care of poor children (like these to him turned Parker's latest thoughts), — Deacon[1] Samuel May, the reformers William Lloyd Garrison and Samuel Gridley Howe,[2] and Francis Jackson, with such younger men as Rufus Leighton, Charles M. Ellis, Frank B. Sanborn, Charles W. Slack, and John C. Haynes, as loyal to Parker's memory as to the living man. The women of the congregation were not a whit behind the men in their intelligence and coöperation and large-hearted sympathy. They were such as Mary Goddard May, the Deacon's wife, noted for all good works, fit mother for such a son as Samuel May of Leicester, Caroline Healey (later Mrs. Dall), Hannah Stevenson, Caroline Thayer, Rebecca and Matilda Goddard, Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Eliza Apthorp, and her sister Sarah Howe, Edmah D. Cheney, — women of whom we may not say "the world was not worthy," but who were

[1] A title brought over from the Hollis Street church, in which he had been one of Pierpont's staunchest friends.

[2] Ultimately Dr. Howe did not find his religious nature, meaning his inherited tastes, satisfied by Parker's ministration, and would have gone with his family to King's Chapel, but Mrs. Howe compromised on James Freeman Clarke. See Mrs. Howe's *Reminiscences* for other aspects of the matter which was to Parker one of the surest of his many griefs. The wound was deep when such a man as Dr. Howe questioned the sufficiency of his spiritual methods and results. There was no rupture of their personal friendship nor of their coöperation for the public good.

worthy of the world and by their qualities and virtues bettered it. Some of them whose inflexions are still those of the present tense and active mood must pardon me if I offend by speaking out their praise.

In November, 1845, the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston was organized as "a body for religious worship." Before long the name was sweeter than honey upon Parker's lips. He could not say "The Twenty-Eighth" and not caress the words. Even the printed page preserves the loving touch. The longed-for child could not have been more passionately loved. The installation service, January 4, 1846, was severely Congregational, the minister and people having it entirely to themselves. He would have had to go about the whole country to get together enough ministers for an ordinary installation service. His sermon, "The Idea of a Christian Church," was the fullest exposition that he ever gave of that idea, and it prefigured an ideal to which his ministry was true as is the needle to the pole. He defined the church as "a body of men and women united together in a common desire of religious excellence and with a common regard for Jesus of Nazareth, regarding him as the noblest example of morality and religion." "Its essential of substance is the union for the purpose of cultivating love to God and man; and the essential of form is the common regard for Jesus, considered as the highest representation of God that we know." Here

it will be noticed there is a general resemblance to the present basis of the National Unitarian Conference, but with an emphasis upon the personal Jesus which that basis does not express. Parker's statement would have been hailed by the conservatives of the Unitarian body in 1894, when the present basis was adopted, with "tumult of acclaim," while the more radical could hardly have been brought up to the line of Parker's emphasis. But this did not mean an unattainable ideal.

A Christian church should aim to have its members Christians as Jesus was the Christ, sons of man as he was, sons of God as much as he. . . . If Jesus was ever mistaken, — as the evangelists make it appear, — then it is a part of Christianity to avoid his mistakes as well as to accept his truths. . . . It is only free men that can find the truth, love the truth, live the truth. As much freedom as you shut out, so much falsehood do you shut in. . . . Every true church has a twofold action: first upon its own members; second on others out of its pale.

A Christian church should be a means of reforming the world, of forming it after the pattern of Christian ideas. . . . It can teach much: now moderating the fury of men, then quickening their sluggish steps. . . . If the church be true, many things which are gainful in the street and expedient in the senate-house will here be set down as wrong, and all gain that comes therefrom seem to be but a loss. If there be a public sin in the land, if a lie invade the state, it is for the church to give the alarm; it is here that it may war on lies and sins; the more widely they are believed in and practiced, the more are they deadly, the more to be opposed. Here let no false idea or false action of the public go

without exposure or rebuke. But let no noble heroism of the times, no noble man pass without due honor.

Here was a clear foreshadowing of the great anti-slavery preaching which was to crown his work, but which in 1846 had hardly been begun. Here, as it were in embryo, were the great sermons upon Adams and Webster, and at this point the sermon's lofty prose broke into the lyric rapture of Lowell's "Present Crisis," which then had had barely a year's repute. Over against "the church termagant," peevishly scolding at sin, he pictured the church militant, fighting it manfully, and the church triumphant, doing glorious things for truth and righteousness. How far he was from failing to do Jesus ample reverence the following passage shows, while it must frankly be conceded that this lofty praise involved no supernatural trait: —

Christianity is humanity; Christ is the Son of man; the manliest of men; humane as a woman; pious and hopeful as a prayer; but brave as man's most daring thought. He has led the world in morals and religion for eighteen hundred years, only because he was the manliest man in it; the humanest and bravest man in it, and hence the divinest. He may lead it eighteen hundred years more, for we are bid [1] to believe that

[1] Not his own thought, which somewhat too easily, as I have said, inferred from the general progress of humanity that the great souls of history would be transcended in its future course. They may be, but the general idea of progress has no such implication. Our schoolboys know much more than Plato knew, and yet how rare the modern "Plato's brain"!

God can never make again a greater man; no, none so great. But the churches do not lead men therein, for they have not his spirit; neither that womanliness which wept over Jerusalem, nor that manliness which drew down fire enough from heaven to light the world's altars for well-nigh two thousand years.

In the concluding part the preacher struck a favorite note — the backwardness of religion as compared with science and the useful arts, its dullness and deadness as compared with business enterprise: —

In our day men have made great advances in science, commerce, manufactures, in all the arts of life. We need, therefore, a development of religion corresponding thereto. . . . If a church can answer these demands, it will be a live church; leading the civilization of the times, living with all the mighty life of this age and nation. Its prayers will be a lifting up of the hearts in noble men towards God, in search of truth, goodness, piety. Its sacraments will be great works of reform, institutions for the comfort and culture of men. . . . If men were to engage in religion as in politics, commerce, arts; if the absolute religion, the Christianity of Christ, were applied to life with all the might of this age, as the Christianity of the church was once applied, what a result should we not behold! We should build up a great state, with unity in the nation, and freedom in the people; a state where there was honorable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for every mind, and love and faith in every heart. Truth would be our sermon, drawn from the oldest of Scriptures, God's writing there in nature, here in man; works of daily duty would be our sacra-

ment; prophets inspired of God would minister the word, and piety send up her psalm of prayer, sweet in its notes, and joyfully prolonged. The noblest monument to Christ, the fairest trophy of religion, is a noble people, where all are well fed and clad, industrious, free, educated, manly, pious, wise, and good.

Theodore Parker is associated so vividly with the Music Hall that, even where it is known, it is generally forgotten that for seven of the fourteen years of his Boston ministry he preached in the Melodeon. His last sermon there, November 14, 1852, "Some Account of My Ministry," made good its title in the most frank and simple manner possible. Many the doubts and fears that were buried in the foundations of that happy confidence which now stood foursquare to all the winds that blow! He said little of those in public. He confided them to his journal's privacy, which I must confess I have not invaded without serious misgivings. Many a line was blotted with his manly tears. His self-consciousness was acute. Perhaps he thought and spoke too much about himself for his best health. But the trait was natural and it was aggravated by the circumstances of his life. It was far from vanity, but it meant the consciousness of great powers and great acquirements and great opportunities. It meant no calm self-satisfaction. Rather was he habitually dissatisfied with himself. No other note recurs in his journal so frequently as that of stern self-blame for his inadequate accomplishment. Tired out in body

and in brain, all things looked dark to him. We have a more just account of his true self in such a passage as the following which occurs in the sermon on "The Position and Duty of a Minister" preached November 21, 1852 — the first in the Music Hall: —

> I have great faith in preaching; faith that a religious sentiment, a religious idea, will revolutionize the world to beauty, holiness, peace, and love. Pardon me, my friends, if I say I have faith in my own preaching; faith that even I shall not speak in vain. You have taught me that. You have taught me to have a good deal of faith in my own preaching; for it is your love of the idea which I have set before you, that has brought you together week after week, and now it has come to be year after year, in the midst of evil report — it was never good report. It was not your love for me: I am glad it was not. It was your love for my idea of man, of God, and of religion. I have faith in preaching, and you have given me reason to have that faith.

One desiring to know what Parker's position as a minister was and how he did his duty could not do better than to read the entire sermon, so closely was the actual conformed to the ideal therein set forth.

It was a happy fortune which enabled the Twenty-Eighth to avail itself of the Music Hall at a time when the congregation had manifestly outgrown the Melodeon and craved

> An ampler ether, a diviner air

for its great preacher's voice. Built, as its name denotes, for musical performances, Music Hall, a brand-new building when the Twenty-Eighth secured it for its meetings, was a successful realization of the most careful study of the principles of acoustics, and it was as good for the speaking as for the singing voice and orchestra. The hall was, and is, 130 feet long, 78 feet wide, and 68 feet high; its architecture simple and impressive, the light coming, as it should, from above; by day through semicircular windows springing from a cornice 50 feet above the floor, by night from jets along the line of the cornice, which, at a Unitarian Festival, as I remember, Dr. William Everett compared to Milton's device for the illumination of the place of pain. Some thought the comparison unfortunate. There were chairs for 1500 on the main floor and for 500 more upon the stage, and 700 more in the two narrow galleries or balconies which ran along the sides and rear. There was standing room for some 300 more, making a total capacity of 3000, which on special occasions was exhausted by the multitude who came to hear "the great American Preacher." The usual congregation filled the floor and overflowed into the galleries and upon the stage, where a kind of body-guard of personal friends generally sat, a little withdrawn from the preacher's central solitude. The great organ which was the glory of the Hall for many years was not introduced until 1863, when Parker had been three years dead, but Crawford's heroic

statue of Beethoven was installed March 1, 1856, and the next morning furnished Parker with the inspiration of his sermon and his prayer.

The service was of the plainest kind of the New England Puritan usage in which the preacher was brought up. The Bible was read with such omissions or amendments as his moral sense required, and other Scriptures, inspired because inspiring, were resorted to from time to time. The hymns were sung by a choir, from the "Book of Hymns" which Parker called "The Sam Book," because it was compiled by Samuel Johnson and Samuel Longfellow. Parker's reading of the hymns was the significant event for some. Sittings were free, the expenses being met by voluntary contributions from an inner circle of devoted friends, not even a collection being taken from the promiscuous crowd. Mr. Parker was always, as Mr. Frothingham puts it, "greedy of a small salary," and the current expenses were easily met; too easily for the self-respect of those who gave nothing because nothing was required.

The preacher was a man five feet eight inches tall; in 1852 bald-headed, and ultimately, if not soon after, with a snowy beard. Mrs. Howe remarks upon the contrast of his youthful face with his baldness as far back as 1844, but the youthfulness did not persist. Inherited disease and overwork were fatal to its charm. The figure was not graceful; the face was not handsome, though the blue-gray eyes were clear and had a penetrating

light, sometimes as of a bayonet's gleam. This was veiled, however, in the pulpit, by the glasses, without which he could not read his manuscript, and he was a manuscript preacher; only at times interjecting unwritten sentences and passages into the written form. There was that in the set of his mouth which spoke for his indomitable will, but the nose gave those who called his face Socratic, pretty much their sole excuse. That "rudder of the face," perhaps, was steering him sometimes when his course was not quite reverent of established forms and usages and important personages.

Mr. Frothingham says, "He had no rhetorical gifts." What follows suggests that he meant oratorical: "Neither was his figure imposing, nor his gesture fine, nor his action graceful." There was, in fact, little gesture or action. He stood still and sometimes raised his hand and let it fall heavily upon his desk — so much was all. But when Mr. Frothingham says, "The style was never dry; the words were sinewy; the sentences short and pithy; the language was fragrant with the odor of the fields, and rich with the juices of the ground, passages of exquisite beauty bloomed on every page," he indicates rhetorical gifts — and more pointedly when he tells the story of a plain man who, having heard him, said, "Is that Theodore Parker? You told me he was a remarkable man; but I understood every word he said." Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and Parker was a master of this art. Yet he made no appeals to passion.

He spoke straight to men's intelligence and conscience and to the goodness of their hearts. No man ever depended less on anything extrinsic to the substance of his message than did he.

Flowers grace ten thousand pulpits in the United States every Sunday morning as the century's end draws on apace. There was a time when Theodore Parker's pulpit had this grace in a quite solitary manner, and my earliest recollection of his name is in connection with the flowers upon his pulpit, instanced as one proof of his awful wickedness; flat paganism, and no less. No flower-fund furnished them; they were votive offerings of friends, who often gathered them with their own hands in their most secret haunts. The pulpit was a floral calendar, from week to week its violets or rhodoras, its wild roses, gentians, asters, keeping step with the procession of the flowers across the valleys and the hills. Once the blue gentians came from the borders of the little brook which flowed hard by the Lexington farmhouse. He plucked them there with thoughts unspeakable and brought them back to the city, where they bloomed double — on the desk and in his tender prayer. His own tenderness for flowers was very great. I trust he knew what Landor wrote: —

> I never pluck the rose; the violet's head
> Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
> And not reproached me; the ever-sacred cup
> Of the pure lily hath between my hands
> Felt safe, unsoiled, nor lost one grain of gold.

Here was a grace beyond his own which stayed his hand from careless ravaging and always left some blossoms of each wayside group for future seed. Similar was his kindness to all tiny creatures, and when his hostess in the country boasted of the prowess of her boy in capturing a grasshopper, Mr. Parker suddenly vanished from the table and in half a minute "the green little vaulter" was back again

> in the sunny grass,
> Catching his heart up at the feel of June.

We cannot be too grateful to Rufus Leighton and Matilda Goddard for their service in preserving for our perennial comfort and delight the forty prayers[1] which make up a little volume by themselves, and are also published in the second volume of Miss Cobbe's edition of Parker's works with the "Ten Sermons." Without these prayers our conception of Theodore Parker's Sunday services would be very different from what it is, with these to soften it and wreathe its harsher lines with blossoms of the wood and field. We should still have had the prayers which his journal folds between its leaves like sweet and fadeless flowers, but these would tell another story, very different from that told by the Leighton-Goddard book. One edition of this (1881) has a preface by Louisa M. Alcott, whose biography tells how helpful Mr. Parker was to her, and whose "Work," a story for

[1] Selected from many hundreds whose fleeting words they caught with careful reverence and tenderly encaged.

young people, depicts him with a loving hand. The first time she heard him preach, the sermon was addressed to "laborious young women," and was full of paternal advice, encouragement, and sympathy.

But the prayer that followed went straight to the hearts of those for whom he prayed, — not only comforting by its tenderness, and strengthening by its brave and cheerful spirit, but showing them where to go for greater help, and how to ask it as simply and confidingly as he did.

It was unlike any prayer I had ever heard; not cold and formal, as if uttered from a sense of duty, not a display of eloquence, nor an impious directing of Deity in his duties toward humanity. It was a quiet talk with God, as if long intercourse and much love had made it natural and easy for the son to seek the Father, — confessing faults, asking help, and submitting all things to the All-wise and tender, as freely as children bring their little sorrows, hopes, and fears to their mother's knee.

The slow, soft folding of the hands, the reverent bowing of the good gray head, the tears that sometimes veiled the voice, the simplicity, frankness, and devout earnestness, made both words and manner wonderfully eloquent; and the phrase, "Our Father and our Mother God," was inexpressibly sweet and beautiful, — seeming to invoke both power and love to sustain and comfort the anxious, overburdened hearts of those who listened and went away to labor and to wait with fresh hope and faith.

To one laborious young woman, just setting forth to seek her fortune, that Sunday was the beginning of a new life, that sermon like the scroll given to Christian,

that prayer the God-speed of one who was to her, as to so many, a valiant Great-heart leading pilgrims through Vanity Fair to the Celestial City.

As the prayer that morning found Louisa Alcott, so many another found some sorrowing, struggling, and despairing heart and wrought the needed help. He did not theorize much about prayer. He took it very much for granted. I have been surprised to find how little formal attention he gave to it in his sermons.[1] It was as if he did not care to

> peep and botanize
> Upon his mother's grave.

It was for him the human side of inspiration, the opening of the mind, the heart, the conscience and the soul to receive the ever-present help of God. In his theology God was neither personal nor impersonal, but a reality transcending these distinctions. In his devotions God was as personal as his own father or mother, and he prayed to him as [illegible] unfettered speech. Prayer as "a moral [illegible]" had for him no attractions. It was for [illegible] the noble communion of the human soul with the Divine Soul of the Universe, an acknowledgment of that *sense of dependence* which was fundamental to his religious philosophy, gratitude for life in such a grand and beauteous world, aspiration for those perfections which withdraw as we advance, shame for those *sins* which were so

[1] But see the last of the *Ten Sermons*, "Communion with God," where the incidental treatment of prayer is uncommonly full.

real to him, while theological *sin* was so unutterably vague.

His philosophy and psychology and theology went far to give the general outline of his prayer. There were thanks for the soul's consciousness of God and Immortality and the Law of Righteousness, and for the fivefold riches of man's nature, — sense, intellect, conscience, affections, soul. There was frankest dealing with the various activities of human life, its business, politics, and domestic cares. The great sins of the nation were acknowledged, its great men remembered in their glory or their shame. Ever the various beauty of the world had timely praise, "the handsome stars," and "every little moss struggling through the city stones." And, with all the rest, there was oftener than not some word going straight to the hearts that were full of anxiety or grief. Others might not know for whom it was intended, but those who had confided their troubles to the great preacher had no doubt.[1] There were times when, before offering the prayer, the man felt as if he were "not in the spirit," but never once when with closed eyes he stood in the accustomed place. Then he became his people's heart and voice. "O God," prayed Father Taylor, "we are a widow with six children." As complete as this was Theodore

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Parker's identification of himself with the people who were his joy and crown.

There were those who would have been content to go away after the prayer, feeling themselves filled and overfilled with the brave, kindly spirit of the man and his serene and joyful trust in God; but for the majority the sermon was the indispensable part of the service. The new place of worship awoke the preacher to a new sense of his great opportunity. Like the doves that came flocking to his windows for the corn he kept provided for their times of scarcity, came the subjects for the sermons he must preach. They were blocked out in 1852 for four years in advance, not without apprehension of such possible intercalations as great occasions might demand. These in the event proved to be many, and too insistent to be put aside, while still the main thread of his intention was held fast. There was never any lack of preaching of the simplest kind, — not controversial, not theological, not sociological or reformatory or political, but homiletical, expatiating on the homeliest every-day concerns of morals and religion. The "Ten Sermons of Religion," preached and published in 1852, is a book that witnesses most graciously to this side of his work; but there is another book, "Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man," a volume of selections from his unpublished sermons, which bears ampler evidence to the same effect. It was compiled by Mr. Rufus Leighton from his

stenographic notes. The controversial part is small, also the theological, except as this was involved in Parker's religiousness in an inextricable manner. But the book is as full of his religion as an egg is full of meat, and the religion is of the sweetest and most homely kind. There is no aspect of men's daily lives that does not get its appropriate and suggestive comment.

This mountainous man was not so simple in his structure as he has sometimes been conceived. Those who imagine that the controversialist was all of him are like those who mistake the foot-hills of Shasta or Tacoma for the real mountain. Higher than the controversialist reached up the scholar and the critic; higher still the philosopher and theologian; far above these went up the preacher, the prophet, the believing soul, eager to share his joy with all his kind. One whose young life he touched with kindling flame has said to me, "He was the only religious man I ever knew." What he meant was that, compared with Theodore Parker, all his contemporaries seemed feeble in their faith and hope and love, their consciousness of God, their consecration to man's highest good. My own experience confirms that lofty praise. I have read hundreds of biographies, the majority those of religious thinkers and teachers, and I have nowhere encountered in the modern world a man whose religiousness has seemed to me so complete as Theodore Parker's, such a perpetual presence and delight, such an abiding strength and peace,

such an abounding inspiration. I do not know of any other who believed so much, whose confidence was so robust, whose optimism was so undaunted by the facts that are not to be eluded or ignored. Here was his most characteristic quality. When I think of Theodore Parker I think of this; not of his philosophy, which was the convenient formula and explanation of his threefold faith and his habitual certainty; not of his learning, though this was mainly an expression of his human sympathy — his interest in all human things; not even of his anti-slavery work, for this was but a single, albeit the highest, illustration of his prophetic gift; not of these lesser heights, but of his genius for religion and his passion for its communication which outsoared them all.

In describing others he frequently described himself, partly because what he described was less the fact than his ideal, and his ideal was actualized in him as is the sculptor's in the stone. Novalis said of Luther, "He was an absolute man: in him soul and body were not divided;" and this could be said of Parker quite as veraciously. This, too, which Parker wrote of Luther: —

> In the language of the shop, the farm, the boat, the street, or the nursery, he told the high truths that reason and religion taught, and took possession of his audience by a storm of speech, pouring upon them all the riches of his brave plebeian soul, baptizing every head anew; a man who with the people seemed more mob than they and with kings the most imperial.

So, too, when he describes a greater than Luther, I cannot escape the persuasion that unconsciously he borrows colors from his own ruddy veins and his own loving heart. Certainly much of the description applies as well to Parker of Lexington as to Jesus of Nazareth.

He was uncommonly large-minded. . . . He was great-hearted, too, with conscience true and sensitive and a great deep religious soul. There lay his strength. It is not for his masterly intellect that I value him most, nor do you, nor does the world; but for his religiousness. And so we commonly underrate the greatness of his intellect. It seems plain that he had that quick intuition which belongs eminently to woman, but which is the attribute of every man of high genius; and that great width of comprehension which can generalize multiform principles to a universal form of truth; and that perception which finds the beautiful in things homely, the sublime in things common, and the Eternal in what is daily and transient. . . . In all history no great man has been so womanly as Jesus. . . . How he thundered and lightened, a great earthquake of eloquence, against the wickedness of his time! That was the masculine side of Jesus. No spring sun was milder, softer, — tenderly kissing the first spring violets on the hillsides of West Roxbury, — than he to the penitent and self-faithful soul.

From these accidental descriptions of Parker I turn to one wholly deliberate — that of Lowell in his "Fable for Critics." Though written in 1848, when Parker had not put forth half his strength, it is, for all its humorous exaggeration, the best description of the great preacher ever written. I

have quoted part of it already, and now quote only another part, though all of it is marvelously good.

Here comes Parker, the Orson of parsons, a man
Whom the Church undertook to put under her ban.
. . . . . .
But the ban was too small or the man was too big,
For he recks not their bells, books, and candles a fig ;
(He scarce looks like a man who would *stay* treated shabbily,
Sophroniscus' son's head o'er the features of Rabelais) ; —
He bangs and bethwacks them, — their backs he salutes
With the whole tree of knowledge torn up by the roots.
. . . . . .
Now P.'s creed than this may be lighter or darker,
But in one thing, 't is clear, he has faith, namely — Parker ;
And this is what makes him the crowd-drawing preacher,
There 's a background of god to each hard-working feature ;
Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest :
There he stands, looking more like a ploughman than priest,
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least ;
His gestures all downright and same, if you will,
As of brown-fisted Hobnail in hoeing a drill ;
But his periods fall on you, stroke after stroke,
Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak,
You forget the man wholly, you 're thankful to meet
With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,
And to hear, you 're not over-particular whence,
Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense.[1]

We cannot do better, in our endeavor to appreciate the substance of Parker's preaching, than to take the line of his fivefold division of human nature : body, mind, conscience, heart, and soul. He believed that every part of the whole man has its appropriate inspiration and that the bodily senses, appetites, and passions are all essen-

[1] Quite Latimer's manner too. See, for example, Latimer's best known sermon, the first before Edward VI.

tial to the completeness of humanity, which suffers equally from their neglect and their abuse. The spirit of the ascetic was not in him. His pulpit tone was often that of daring sympathy with the ardors of man's passional nature. A marriage in which they had no part was for him only a partial marriage. Walt Whitman had no fuller sense of the excellence of the human body in all its parts and functions than had Theodore Parker. "God put no bad thing there," he said; "it is full of good things; every bone from the crown to the foot is a good bone; every muscle is a good muscle; every nerve which animates the two is a good nerve." He did not tire of praising the body's beauty and its suppleness and its wonderful adaptation to its useful ends.

Closely allied with this aspect of his preaching was another which suggests Whitman's poetry — his sympathy, as of Natura Naturans herself, the dear old Mother, with all our poor relations of the animal world. Morally, if not intellectually, his anticipation of Darwin was complete. Whitman could have borrowed from him all his admiration for the fecundity and felicity of that world without exhausting, or sensibly diminishing Parker's store. In the eighth of the "Ten Sermons," "Conscious Religion as a Source of Joy," there is a wonderful outburst of this sympathy: —

The young fish you shall find even now on the shallow beaches of some sheltered Atlantic bay, how happy they are! Voiceless, dwelling in the cold unsocial ele-

ment of water, moving with the flapping of the sea and never still amid the ocean waves' immeasurable length, — how delightful are these little children of God! Their life seems one continuous holiday. Their food is plenteous as the water itself. . . . They fear no hell. These cold, white-fleshed, and bloodless little atomies seem ever full of joy as they can hold.

The insects next allure him, — the butterfly so joyous "in his claret-colored robe, so daintily set off with a silver edge," "in the sunny sheltered spots in the woods with the brown leaves about him," — then "the adventurous birds," and

Even the reptiles, the cold snake, the bunchy and calumniated toad, the frog, now newly awakened from his hibernating sleep, have a joy in their existence which is complete and seems perfect. . . . How joyously the frogs welcome in the spring which knocks at the icy door of their dwelling and rouses them to new life! What delight they have in their thin piping notes at this time, and in the hoarse thunders with which they will shake the bog in weeks to come; in their wooing and their marriage song. . . . The young of all animals are full of delight! . . . As they grow older they have a wider and a wiser joy, a quiet cheerfulness. The matronly cow, ruminating beside her playful and hornless little one, is a type of quiet joy and entire satisfaction. . . . So is it with the spider, who is not the malignant kidnapper he is thought, but has a little harmless world of joy.

He takes a handful of water from the rotting timbers of a wharf and finds it full of polyps, medusæ, and the like, happy as if the world were

made for them alone, and down here in the mud and scum of things he finds the beginnings of Conscious Religion as a Source of Joy and the Soul's Normal Delight in the Infinite God which he celebrated in a sermon with that title to the Progressive Friends of Longwood, Pa. (1858), one of the best expressions of his highest and most characteristic thought.

In this connection, as fitly as in any other, due reference may be made to Parker's expansion and delight responsive to the various beauty of the world. To quote a hundred examples would be an easy matter, none of them didactic, but so spontaneous that his preaching must have inspired the love of natural beauty in many hearts to which it had been strange. The beauty of youths and maidens had for him immense attraction, and he dwelt with frank sincerity upon the mystic yearnings which that beauty breeds in them; his sentiment unspoiled by any sentimental taint. Once, speaking of the stars, his language is too evidently a paraphrase of Emerson's "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years," etc., on the first page of "Nature," but he could write as bravely as need be of the "few great, hardy, venturesome stars which endure the near approach of day," "seen by the early marketer, in rough garments, riding through the darkness, bringing men's bread to town." This homely touch is never far away. Like Thoreau's Indian hatchets — found anywhere — are such passages as this: —

Even in the city, in the commonest street, if it is only a little lonesome, small plants find board and lodging in the chinky stones, and lift their thin faces and seem to wish good-morning to the rapid-stirring man or maid who knows these little apostles and botanic ministers at large, who are meant to evangelize the world, and are without staff and scrip and who never chide the unthankful passenger.

And all the beauty of the world was published — so he taught — as an assurance of God's love to men, and was a manifestation of the essential character of the Infinite Being.

Parker's hierarchy of the human faculties was eloquent of his private character: Intellect, conscience, affection, religiousness — that was the order in which the realities of life made their appeal to him. He was, indeed, what George William Curtis called Charles Sumner, "Conscience incarnate," but it was the human heart by which he lived as by no other grace. There was nothing arbitrary in his subordination of conscience to affection; it was the spontaneous election of his personality. Such was the order of precedence in his daily life. Great as he was in intellect and in conscience, he was greater in affection. Whenever I read of Mr. Great-heart in Bunyan, I always think of Theodore Parker as worthy of that honorable name.

Piety was not exhausted in the terms of his evaluation by any merely conscious relation of the soul to God. "The love of truth is the natural

and instinctive piety of the mind." To the development of this intellectual piety he brought the wealth of many sermons; over against the fidelity of science and philosophy showing the meanness of the churches and the theologians, with what Coleridge called their "orthodox lying for God," their timidity, and willful obscuration of the most obvious facts. It was to education as an aid to intellectual piety that he gave his warmest praise. Yet this man of many books was clear in his perception that books are not the only tools with which the mind can do its proper work: —

> Corn and cattle are the farmer's words, houses are the language of the carpenter, locomotives are the ironworker's speech, and the wares of the merchant are the utterance of his mental calculation. . . . I once knew a grocer who knew the history of all the articles in his wealthy shop, whence they came, how they were produced, and for what they were useful. He made his shop a library, and got as much science, ay, as much poetry, out of it as many a scholar from his library of books. He was a grocer; but he was also a *man* in the grocery business, which is another thing.

Nothing if not democratic, he delighted in translating the realities of the intellectual and moral life into these homely terms and in speaking in one breath the names of the most famous of mankind and those but little known. His parables were often drawn from his own early life. His father was the "hard-working man, a farmer and mechanic, who in the winter nights rose a great while

before day and out of the darkness coaxed him at least two hours of hard study." His own love of knowledge was so passionate and found such exuberant expression in his sermons that many of his people, especially the younger men, must have derived from him an impulse towards reading and study of incomparable significance.

It will be seen that morality did not stand over against piety in Parker's thought, as in the usual discriminations. Piety was the inclusive term; morality was one form of it, a higher form than the love of truth, a lower form than the love of persons and the all-including love of God. This did not mean that in the collisions of justice and affection, the former must give way. It does so with women, he said; women showing, as he thought, better than men the instinctive tendencies of human nature. He approved the act of Brutus, subordinating his paternal affection to the welfare of the state and decreeing the death of his son. So it appears that intuition is not final in all cases. His sturdy common sense made the necessary qualifications of his general conception. Emerson said that the moon never shines so sweetly as upon our necessary journey, and Parker's incidental thought often shines with a more genial and persuasive light than his rigid generalizations. Absolute right, absolute justice, — these were phrases very dear to him, but he recognized the relative in morals; saw that war, slavery, polygamy were good things in their day, and that revolution, " the

lynch law of nations," is a medicine which they sometimes need: "The Desire of all nations comes not always on an ass's colt."

Parker loved to preach on the affections — the piety of the heart — and was never more persuasive than when doing so. Meditation was not in his line, but he meditated a good deal upon domestic life and on the conditions of true marriage. His meditation bore much sermon-fruit, but his journal shows an intense preoccupation with the matter and admits us to his deeper mind. His "Sermon of Old Age" is one of the most signal examples of his preaching in this kind, but a great sea rolls in behind this special wave. The central thought is always that a true marriage is not an event, but a process: —

> A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. . . . Such a large and sweet fruit is a complete marriage that it needs a very long summer to ripen in and then a long winter to mellow and season it. But a real happy marriage of love and judgment, between a noble man and woman, is one of the things so very handsome, that if the sun were, as the Greeks fabled, a god, he might stop the world and hold it still now and then in order to look all day long on some example thereof and feast his eyes on such a spectacle.

But however eloquent his preaching on the affections, and however eager his insistence on their superiority to intellect and conscience, it was as a preacher of righteousness that he had the strength of ten. His inevitable tendency did not tally with

his deliberate conclusions. In his personal concerns, affection was no doubt the ruling power; but it was under the flag of conscience that he fought the battles of his public life. No aspect of men's conduct escaped his observation and his appropriate praise or blame. The "Sermon of Merchants" shows how largely and exhaustively he could treat the commercial side of life. There were others more sociological than this, such as the "Sermon of Poverty," the two on the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, that on "The Moral Condition of Boston," which had for a pendant one on the spiritual condition of the city. These subjects were treated with tremendous force and feeling. They were preëminently statistical, but it was said of Gladstone that he could make figures sing, and Parker had a portion of his gift. And there were figures of speech as well as the ten Arabic signs, and the discussion, wherever it began, was always carried up into the higher courts of morals and religion; like Bishop Berkeley's treatise on Tar-Water which became, in its final stage, an argument for the Trinity.[1]

But there were sermons very different from these, such as dealt with the most common every-day affairs, and more simple and more searching they could not have been.

In his preaching generally, as in the "Ten Sermons," the climax was reserved for the conscious

[1] I reserve for another chapter the great anti-slavery sermons in which his ethical preaching attained its most exalted pitch.

delight of the soul in that Infinity of Truth, Beauty, Justice, Love, from which he set out, at once the Alpha and the Omega of his religious thought and life. However cordial his concession of the reality of unconscious piety, he never failed to make it plain that, without a conscious relation of the soul to God, life is a poor aborted thing in comparison with its normal possibilities. In the "Ten Sermons" there are three upon this head: "Of Conscious Religion and the Soul," "Of Conscious Religion as a Source of Strength," "Of Conscious Religion as a Source of Joy;" and this special emphasis does not exceed that of his habitual affirmation. The several pieties of truth, of conscience, of affection are not enough. For a complete piety we must unite them all with the consciousness of God, and so have the conscious piety of mind and conscience, heart and soul; the love of God with all the faculties, as infinite truth, infinite justice, infinite love, infinite Father and Mother of all worlds and souls. This utmost piety, piety of the soul, which has its end in God, will react on all the several pieties, heretofore unconscious, and, making them conscious, make them more full and joyous; make them react on the soul's conscious piety which, in its turn reacting upon them, will make them ever more divinely sweet and fair. Language was poor to tell the wonder of this interaction of the soul's conscious piety and the several pieties of man's natural parts. No limit could be set to what a man could

bear, or do, or be whose piety was conscious in each several part, the highest giving light and strength to all the rest.

He loved to celebrate the dignity of human nature with Dr. Channing and the dignity of human character with Dr. Dewey,[1] and all his thought of human greatness burst, flower-like, at the top into his strong assurance of a future life. With many incidental references to this great subject, there are two special sermons written in 1846 and 1853 in which his thoughts on it find their most deliberate expression. The latter, which is one of the "Sermons of Theism," etc., is the better known, but I am disposed to think the other the more excellent. They both assert with equal confidence man's consciousness of immortality, but the preacher did not preach this consciousness as something unconditioned by the facts of organization and environment, and he did not disdain the confirmation of such inductive or deductive reasoning as might offer him its aid. The deductive argument was from the wisdom and goodness of God. The inductive arguments were drawn from the general belief of mankind, — a vicious circle it would seem, — and from the universal desire, less obvious now, perhaps, than it was in 1846, what with our closer studies and our fresh experience. As to the manner of the other life, it must be conscious, active, social, retributive. "Shall we know our friends

[1] Whose conservative political temper blinded Parker to his many great and noble qualities.

again?" He could not doubt it. "Man loves to think it; yet to trust is wiser than to prophesy. The girl who went from us a little one may be as parent to her father when he comes," and many of our friends "surpass the radiant manliness which Jesus won and wore" when he was living among men.

Parker is nowhere so inconsistent with himself, nowhere so false to his own central thought of morality as something absolute, as where he writes:

> If to-morrow I perish utterly, then I shall only take counsel for to-day and ask for qualities that last no longer. My fathers will be to me only as the ground out of which my bread-corn is grown; dead, they are like the rotten mould of the earth, their memory of small concern to me. Posterity, — I shall care nothing for the future generations of mankind. . . . Morality will vanish.

Here is a morality as little absolute as that of those who make religion and morality depend upon miraculous events. "Wise men are not always wise," said Emerson, and Parker's wisdom was here at the lowest ebb. It is impossible to doubt that his ideas of a future life inspired him with great moral enthusiasm; and yet, without them, he would not, I think, have found his moral occupation gone. Slavery and the Popular Theology of Christendom would still have been considered foemen worthy of his steel. He would still have found himself one of the

> fellow heirs to that small island, Life,
> Where we must plough and sow and reap with brothers.

His arguments for immortality may not have convinced his hearers; they may not have found a consciousness like his in their own breasts; but how could they resist the impact of a personal confidence so fervid and so strong? As it was here so was it everywhere. It was not his philosophy or theology, it was his religion, the product of his organization, his temperament, and his experience, that convinced men as could no argument, and made them evangelists of the faith they had received. His sincerity and his humanity were not to be escaped. It was evident that he believed in his own gospel with all his mind and heart and soul. It was evident that he had a passionate desire to do men good. Men listened to his most terrible invectives feeling that there were burdens laid upon the preacher which he might not refuse to bear. Because of these things he was a great religious leader in his day. We must look wide and long to find another so abounding in the love of God and Man as he, so bent as he was upon sharing his own joy in this with others, and with such a genius for communicating that which was to him of all good things the best.

## CHAPTER IX

### ANTI-SLAVERY WORD AND WORK

Theodore Parker was interested in all the great reformatory movements of his time. Peace, temperance, education, the condition of women, penal legislation, prison discipline, the moral and mental destitution of the rich, the physical destitution of the poor — all these things engaged his sympathy and warmed his blood, dictating many a page in his sermons, often a whole sermon, but they did not any of them break in upon the settled order of his life and change its course and become a dominant factor in his experience. It was different with the anti-slavery reform. Probably his interest in this would have grown more rapidly if he had not for a time been so much engrossed in his theological and religious controversy with the Boston ministers.[1] It was in the same year with the South Boston sermon that he preached his first anti-slavery sermon, January 31, 1841. It was repeated June 4, 1843. Other sermons before this one had contained allusions to

[1] In the presidential campaign of 1840 he took not the slightest interest, finding nothing to choose between Harrison and Van Buren.

slavery. This one is but the faintest shadow of those he preached in the full tide of his career. It reserves for its climax some considerations referring to that slavery which is constituted by the appetites and passions of the individual. It has a good word for the Abolitionists, though they are "sometimes extravagant," and a good word for the moderate men who serve as a balance wheel to the anti-slavery machine, and are like a chilly day in April when the vegetation is coming on too fast.

The annexation of Texas (March 3, 1845) and the ensuing war with Mexico revealed the depths of passionate humanity which lay concealed under the placid surface of his first theoretic exposition. Nevertheless the emphasis in his Mexican War preaching was upon the evil of war, not upon the evil of slavery, albeit slavery was the root of which the Mexican War was blade and fruit, as Parker clearly saw and said. June 7, 1846, he preached at the Melodeon "A Sermon of War," one of the first, if not the first, of those sermons in which the massing of statistics was a striking part. Charles Sumner's "True Grandeur of Nations" had been delivered about a year before, but evidently its echoes had not ceased to ring in Parker's mind, and its methods furnished him with a great example. He saw the provisional place of war in civilization as clearly as the evolutionist. He conceived that war might be a necessary instrument of justice in the modern world; but he saw as clearly as General Sherman that "war is hell,"

and he set forth its evils with the vivid strokes of such painter critics of war as Wiertz and Vereschagin. He denounced the Mexican War as "wholly wrong;" "as bad as the partition of Poland." He asked: —

> What shall we do in regard to this present war? We can refuse to take any part in it; we can encourage others to do the same; we can aid men, if need be, who suffer because they refuse. Men will call us traitors: What then? That hurt nobody in '76! We are a rebellious nation; our whole history is treason; our blood was attainted before we were born; our creeds are infidelity to the mother church; our constitution treason to our fatherland. What of that? Though all the governors in the world bid us commit treason against man, and set the example, let us never submit.

February 4, 1847, he made a speech in Faneuil Hall, in which matters were not minced. He denounced the war as an intolerably wicked one, "waged for a mean and infamous purpose, the extension of slavery." He described the United States as "a great boy fighting a little one, and that little one feeble and sick. What makes it worse is, the little boy is in the right, and the big boy is in the wrong and tells solemn lies to make his side seem right." "The war had a mean and infamous beginning." Men should have said, "This is a war for slavery, a mean and infamous war; an aristocratic war, a war against the best interests of mankind. If God please, we will die a thousand times, but never draw blade in this

wicked war." Thereupon (he was speaking in the gallery) there were cries of "Throw him over!" "What would you do next?" he asked. "Drag you out of the hall." "What good would that do? It would not wipe off the infamy of this war; would not make it any less wicked." In our recent history few of the speeches made have been so "treasonable" as this.

June 25, 1848, Parker preached another sermon on the Mexican War. The treaty of peace had been ratified on the 25th of the preceding month. He stood up and counted the cost in money and in men. The war had not, he thought, been a cruel one, except for the hanging of forty-eight deserters — there were 4966 deserters all told — by General Harney, whose monument is conspicuous in the great soldiers' cemetery at Arlington, D. C. And yet,

> If you take all the theft, all the assaults, all the cases of arson, ever committed in time of peace in the United States since the settlement of Jamestown in 1608, and add to them all the cases of violence offered to woman, with all the murders, they will not amount to half the wrongs committed in the war for the plunder of Mexico.

He considered the effects of the war on the national temper, the political parties, and the character of the soldiers. He had no illusions here. Our most scientific penologists do not better understand what war does for the soldier.

> Hereafter they will be of little service in any good work. Many of them were the offscourings of the peo-

ple at first. Now these men have tasted the idleness, the intemperance, the debauchery of a camp. . . . They will come home before long. . . . What will be their influence as fathers, husbands ?

Parker's first great anti-slavery utterance was not a spoken word. It was a printed " Letter to the People of the United States touching the Matter of Slavery." It is possible that the form was suggested by Channing's open letters to Jonathan Phillips, Henry Clay, and others, on the same subject. The letter, dated December 22, 1847, another instance of his affinity for days and feasts, came out early in 1848. Lowell writes to his friend Charles F. Briggs (" Harry Franco "), March 26, 1848, " You say it is a merit of Theodore Parker's letter that there is no Garrisonism in it. Why, it is full of Garrisonism from one end to the other. But for Garrison's seventeen years' toil the book had never been written." But there was a measure of truth in Briggs's remark. Garrison's argument had been almost exclusively humanitarian. Parker's was politico-economical. It was more than this, but its main strength was on this line, and he never made a better general statement of the case of Freedom against Slavery, though he went on collecting facts until the inexorable end. Ten pages were given to the history of slavery, eight to the condition and treatment of slaves, ten to the effects on industry, two to effects on population, ten to effects on education, fifteen to effects on law and politics, five to " Slavery considered as

a Wrong." Here was the foundation from which afterward he built up his great anti-slavery denunciation and appeal. The letter was as dignified and dispassionate as it could have been had Channing written it. If "touched with emotion," it was not deeply interpenetrated therewith.

The Compromise of 1850 remedied this defect. The several renditions it inspired set Parker's heart on fire. They appealed to his humanity, to that part of him which subordinated all the rest. He was no sentimentalist and had no illusions as to the negro character. Edward Everett had a more favorable opinion of it. Emerson's was more genial and more just. Parker's estimate of the negro, intellectually and morally, was low. He exaggerated the sensuality of the negro as he did that of the Jew, whom he placed only a little higher in this respect.[1] Moreover the negro had for him a certain physical repulsion. But his humanity easily absorbed the instinctive repulsion and the theoretic doubts. He could see no human creature wronged and not feel the pain in his own side. The limitations of the negro, as he conceived them, were not reasons for degrading him. They were appeals to his benevolence and were responded to as such.

The interval between the "Letter" of 1848 and the Compromises of 1850 was not without significant contributions from Parker to the anti-slavery cause. Some of these have been already men-

[1] Letter to David A. Wasson, December 12, 1857.

tioned in connection with the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review:" "The Political Destination of America;" "Some Thoughts on the Free Soil Party and the Election of General Taylor;" the review of Polk's administration; and, very notably, the great funeral discourses on John Quincy Adams and President Taylor, the former as much more important than the latter as the theme required. The Adams discourse has been too much regarded as merely prefiguring the much greater discourse on Webster, and as paling in the light of that. It was a daring innovation on the traditional pulpit eulogy of the great public man, which was a monochromatic wash of indiscriminate praise. He put his finger on one spot and another, saying "Thou ailest here, and here," but, in the final summing up, he wrote, and availed himself of special type to emphasize the words: THE ONE GREAT MAN SINCE WASHINGTON, WHOM AMERICA HAD NO CAUSE TO FEAR. That the discourse was years in the making, the journal plainly shows. In one passage we have Parker anticipating the Civil Service Reform, headed in the sixties by the Unitarians Sumner and Jenckes and Curtis, and in the seventies jointly with these by their co-religionists Dr. Bellows and his parishioner Dorman B. Eaton. Parker praised Adams for looking only to the ability and integrity of the official, adding, "I wish it was no praise to say these things; but it is praise I dare not apply to any other man since Washington." This too he praised: that,

when the Unitarians in Washington, "a feeble folk," met in a small, obscure room over a public bathing-house, Adams went and worshiped with them there. It would be interesting to know if Webster and Calhoun, who were of the same religious opinion, confessed to it as openly when it was not fashionable and hardly respectable.

Parker dealt with Taylor as sincerely as with Adams. He could not forget that he was a slaveholder by deliberate choice, on the eve of his presidency buying one hundred and fourteen human beings to have and to hold as property. With equal deliberation he led our armies in a wicked war gendered by Slavery and Falsehood most illicitly. Nevertheless,

> An honest man, he looked for honest foes and honest friends; but his hardest battles were fought after he ceased to be a soldier. . . . I sincerely believe that he was more of a man than his political supporters thought him; that he had more natural sagacity, more common sense, more firmness of purpose, and very much more honesty than they expected or desired; . . . that he took Washington for his general model.

Parallel with these faithful characterizations, there were frequent contributions of a more direct nature to the anti-slavery conflict. December 28, 1847, only six days after finishing his "Letter," he made a speech in Faneuil Hall in which he translated much of the "Letter," especially the economical part, into terms suited to the homeliest apprehension. August 4, 1849, he preached in

Worcester on a Fast Day appointed on account of the cholera, and devoted his sermon to showing that African Slavery was a national disease compared with which Asiatic cholera was little to be feared.

The Compromises of 1850 were a permission to many anti-slavery people who had broken away from the great parties to return to their allegiance. Nearly 150,000 did so, judging by the vote for Hale and Julian as compared with that for Van Buren and Adams. But what was a sedative to so many was an exhilarant to Theodore Parker. What put so many consciences to sleep roused his as with a peal of thunder in the silent night. The whole order of his life took on a different form and color from the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law onward for the next eight years, and especially from the moment when that law attained in Boston to its first practical applications. No one was more sensitive than Parker to great abstract ideas and ideals, but so many sided was his nature that the most concrete examples had for him a more compelling force. The great scheme of study to which he had given so much thought and preparation had to be set aside. There was no time for that together with his various duties pertaining to his position as chairman of the Executive Committee of the Vigilance Committee. The journal tells the story, as thinner and thinner flows the stream of notes upon the Development of Religion. Less money went every year for books and more for fugitive slaves or one form and another of the anti-

slavery agitation. More and more frequently the Sunday sermon or the lyceum lecture found its inspiration in the general bearings of the conflict or in some immediate event of particular atrocity.

The overwork was terrible and cut short the measure of his years. Samuel May, of Leicester, an anti-slavery workman of high rank, born four months before Parker, is living still,[1] and it is possible that Parker may have been but for his anti-slavery work. This was as fatal to him as the ball which struck him down to Colonel Robert G. Shaw, one of Parker's Sunday-school scholars at West Roxbury, and Parker was not less a martyr in the good cause than that young hero. His constitutional inheritance did not promise length of days, but that he stood such a tremendous strain so long suggests that if he had not attempted the superhuman he might at least have filled out the promised threescore years and ten.

The fugitive slave cases furnished situations which lost nothing for Parker by being picturesque and striking and dramatic. He could be something of an actor himself upon occasion, with no loss of sincerity; merely adopting a particular manner to produce a particular effect. There was even something melodramatic in the manner of his recurrence to such an incident as his marriage of the Crafts, and in the incident itself. So, too, in his recurrence to his grandfather's revolutionary arms, and to his arming of himself when Ellen

[1] June 15, 1899. P. S. — He died November 24, 1899.

Craft was sheltered in his house and the kidnappers were in hot pursuit. But the man's humble, human reality was not impugned by these heroisms of his character, as doubtless the kidnappers would have discovered if they had invaded him in his study with the intent to rob him of a parishioner.

His first fugitive slave case was that of Latimer in 1842, when [illegible] whilst his [illegible] was pending. [illegible] Parker's way not [illegible] as it was tempered with prudence, but we find him (December 18th) writing a long letter explaining why he had not read from the pulpit a [illegible] petition on behalf of Latimer and others in his case. When in 1846 a negro arrived in Boston, the Ottoman, with a New England master, arrived there with a slave secreted in the hold, but [illegible] with authorities and with law the captain [illegible] had him sent back to New Orleans. There was a great indignation meeting in Faneuil Hall, in the getting up of which Parker was prominent. John Quincy Adams presided, making his last speech in that place of honor, Parker making his first. In the same year (May 1846) was Torrey's funeral service at Tremont Temple, Park Street Church having been refused, after having been promised, to the man who had run off two hundred slaves and imprisoned in a Maryland jail until his death. Parker, though sick, was there in the rainy weather, considering little or few were present, and wishing he might speak a word to [illegible] the [illegible] Park-

tan prayer; calm, deep, forgiving, full of charity and nobleness."

In October following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law and other Compromise measures of August, 1850, there was an indignation meeting in Faneuil Hall at which the great speeches were those of Phillips and Parker, Lowell's father offering a simple prayer to the "Father of *all* men." Parker told of a fugitive in Canada who that day (October 14th) had telegraphed his wife in Boston asking, Could he come back? "Will you let him come?" asked Parker. "How many of you will defend him to the worst?" A vote was taken and up went "a forest of hands." He invoked the *pity* of the people for the sole representative[1] from Massachusetts who had voted for the intolerable law. There had been several rehearsals for this speech. One was at another meeting in Faneuil Hall, March 25, 1850, which he was active in procuring. He tried to rally the Whigs and the Free Soilers to denounce Webster's Seventh of March speech; failed utterly, and fell back on the Abolitionists. Too daringly he boasted: "There were three fugitives at my house the other night. Ellen Craft was one of them." He told the assemblage that she was there before him; "not so dark as Mr. Webster himself." He imagined a situation

[1] Hon. Samuel A. Eliot of Boston. It is significant that he subscribed generously to the fund for purchasing Anthony Burns from his master and setting him free. Such was the inmost heart of many Union-saving citizens.

in which her rendition should be attempted, and asked, "Does Mr. Webster suppose that such a law could be executed in Boston?" Mr. Webster did, and therein was wiser than Parker. But Parker was the wiser when he said: —

> Perpetuate slavery! We cannot do it. Nothing will save it. It is girt about by a ring of fire which daily grows narrower. . . . It cannot be saved in this age of the world until you nullify every ordinance of nature, until you repeal the will of God and dissolve the union He has made between righteousness and the welfare of a people.

Another important speech was before the New England Anti-Slavery Society on the 29th of May. Parker never accepted the principles of Garrison in their ultimate entirety. Disunion was not his way out if any better could be found. Non-voting was impossible for him, though he agreed with Garrison that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document — "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." So far as he accepted the Republican formula, "Freedom national, Slavery sectional," it was, I think, merely as a provisional scheme, not as a statement of the constitutional fact. But whatever his differences with Garrison he anticipated Lincoln's judgment of him as the chief source of anti-slavery power,[1] and he was nowhere more at home than on the platforms of the Garrison societies, and nowhere more welcome.

[1] New York *Tribune*, November 4, 1883: Hon. D. H. Chamberlain.

He was not less free to blame them than to praise. That the Free Soil and later the Republican formula was merely provisional with him is proven by his words at the meeting of May 29, 1850: —

> By and by there will be a political party with a wider basis than the Free Soil party, who will declare that the nation itself must put an end to slavery in the nation; and if the Constitution of the United States will not allow it, there is another constitution that will. Then the title "Defender and Expounder of the Constitution of the United States" will give way to this, "Defender and Expounder of the Constitution of the Universe" and we shall reaffirm the ordinance of nature and reenact the will of God.

It was less than a fortnight after the October meeting in Faneuil Hall that Parker, coming back from a lecture in Plymouth (October 25th), found one Hughes, the jailer of Macon, Ga., and one Knight, whom Hughes had brought as a witness, on the track of William and Ellen Craft. These were Parker's parishioners and he was very proud of them. Minister at large to all the fugitives in the city, William and Ellen Craft were his peculiar joy. William had been a joiner in Macon, hiring himself from his owner for $200 a year. As I remember him in my own pulpit in the later sixties he was a fine piece of manhood, putting to shame, I thought, a good many of the white folk who were much scandalized when I took him the next day to dine with me at the Astor House, with serene unconsciousness from which I finally awoke.

Hughes and Knight were arrested for defamation of character, they having charged Craft with being a thief. Hughes was much enraged. "It 's not the niggers I care about," he said; "it 's the principle of the thing." They easily found bail for $10,000, such good friends had slavery in Boston, and got off with some difficulty from the Court House, the crowd chasing their carriage and breaking its windows.

A meeting of the Vigilance Committee was at once called. This committee was of earlier date than the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. It dated from the Ottoman incident of 1846, if not from the Latimer incident of 1842. In the course of 1850 its membership increased rapidly, until it was 250. Parker's name was first on the executive committee and his position was no sinecure. He drafted the resolutions advising the colored fugitives of Boston to remain in the city and assuring them that they should not be sent back into slavery. If the promise was not kept, it was no fault of his. He gave abundant time and thought to the work of the committee. The Melodeon being closed for repairs, he went to hear Freeman Clarke preach and was called out to attend to a new arrival of kidnappers. Four days in February, '52, tell the story of many others: —

Feb. 22. Washington's birthday. Very busy with fugitive slave matters.

Feb. 24. Not well. Writing report on fugitive slave petitions, etc.

Feb. 25. At home — about anti-slavery business. P. M. at the State House with Anti-Slavery Committee. Phillips, Sewall, and Ellis spoke. Vigilance Committee sat at night.

Feb. 26. Much time in fugitive slave matters.

Many of the entries are written without names, to prevent discovery, and there was much stricter reticence. The story of Parker's anti-slavery activity does not appear fully in his journal. There is much more of it in his published and unpublished sermons. Hundreds of letters take up the wondrous tale. The most picturesque memorial is a scrap-book now in the Boston Public Library — "Memoranda of the Troubles occasioned by the infamous Fugitive Slave Law from March 15, 1851, to February 19, 1856." The title and the compilation are Parker's own. Half of the book is taken up with posters warning the fugitives of danger and summoning their friends to the rescue, and many of these bear, unmistakably, the mark of Parker's hand. He would have been worth his weight in silver, if not in gold, to a modern yellow journalist bent upon head-lines of the most startling character.

To return to Parker's sheep and the besetting wolves: one of these posters was issued describing Hughes and Knight in terms more exact than complimentary. Members of the committee shadowed them wherever they went. Meantime Parker drove to Brookline, where Ellen was concealed at Ellis Gray Loring's, to cheer her up; then to see William

and inspect his arms — a good revolver and two other pistols, a bowie-knife and another knife.[1] The next day the committee met, about sixty of them, at the United States Hotel, there calling upon Hughes and Knight. Parker was spokesman, and succeeded in frightening the kidnappers so thoroughly that they took the afternoon train for New York, and not an hour too soon for their own safety and the city's peace.

The next thing in order was to get William and Ellen Craft out of the country. They were faithful husband and wife, but without formal marriage, which they now sought at Parker's hands. He married them, November 7th, at a colored boarding-house. It was an impressive wedding. Parker's marriage service was never twice alike. It always took on something from the immediate circumstance. He told William Craft that if worse came to worst he must defend the liberty of his wife against all comers. A Bible and a bowie-knife lay on two tables in the room. With that spontaneous aptness which served him so often, Parker took them and put them in the husband's hands, one for the body's, the other for the soul's, defense. Melodramatic, if you please, but with a kernel of invincible reality. The Crafts started for England, taking with them a letter from Parker to James Martineau commending them to his parochial care.

The next fugitive slave case, that of Shadrach,

[1] There is some confusion in the different accounts of William's personal armory, but evidently it was remarkable, if not unique.

had a truly comical procedure. He was arrested on Saturday, February 15, 1851, and prayers were asked for him the next day in all the churches. But the old colored woman's account of the Almighty, as "faithful but tedious," was not justified by the event. The prayers got no chance. They were anticipated by Shadrach's deliverance. Parker's interposition was as little needed. The case had been adjourned when he arrived at the court-room, and the fugitive had been hustled out of the room by the impetuous rush of a jubilant and joking crowd, headed by a colored man who had not set out to do anything in particular. Shadrach was soon upon his way to Canada. Parker wrote in his journal that the rescue was the most noble deed done in Boston since the Boston tea-party of 1773. But it was too accidental to deserve such lofty praise.

The Craft business had seemed to reassure the colored fugitives of Boston, but the Shadrach arrest, notwithstanding its fortunate outcome, filled them with dismay and scattered them like chaff before the wind. And so it happened that when Thomas Sims was assaulted April 3d, and, making some manly defense, was arrested for disturbing the peace, there was no body of colored people for Colonel Higginson and Lewis Hayden, the chief colored man in Boston, to reckon on for an effective measure of relief. Whigs and Democrats were out of the question ; Free Soilers little better ; while of the Abolitionists not a few were non-re-

sistants. In his "Cheerful Yesterdays" Colonel Higginson has told with admirable wit and humor the stories of the Sims and Burns renditions, and the vain endeavors that were made to nullify those shameful acts. No one saw more of those acts than Colonel Higginson, or was more a part of those endeavors. At this remove he sees the humorous elements involved in doings which in their main effect were sufficiently tragical. At least one scheme for rescuing Sims promised well, but it was anticipated by the enemy. The last and most daring one was planned in Parker's study. It contemplated nothing less than the seizure of the vessel in which Sims was to be taken to Savannah on her way to that port. There were men fit for the business, but the scheme was quenched by the uncertainty attaching to the method of Sims's transportation. But for this hitch, an indictment for collusive piracy might have anticipated Parker's indictment for "misdemeanor" by three years.

Denied the writ of *habeas corpus*, without a trial, Sims was delivered over to the claimant by the United States Commissioner, George Ticknor Curtis, after such brief examination as might have answered for an habitual drunkard charged with a new offense. Preferring death to slavery, the victim pleaded for a knife with which to free his soul from the poor body's thrall, but this favor was of course impossible. On the 19th of April he was duly delivered to his master by a Boston delega-

tion, and whipped after a fashion that went far to make the owner's repossession void and of no effect.

On April 10th, while Sims was still a prisoner in the Boston Court House, Parker preached a tremendous sermon on "The Chief Sins of the Nation." Could he have anticipated the coincidence of Sims's treatment in Savannah with the anniversary of Lexington and Concord his parallels could hardly have been more deadly than they were. But the coincidence was not lost on him. On April 12, 1852, he preached a sermon on the first anniversary of the Sims rendition, "The Boston Kidnapping," which economized the coincidence for its full worth. The anniversary discourse was awful in its denunciation of the crime of April 12th, but it had not the spontaneous energy of the sermon preached immediately on that consummation. This was the sermon in which he summoned Nero and Torquemada and Jeffreys to make up a pious contrast with the iniquity of Commissioner Curtis. He begged their pardon for asking them to come and meet so base a man. He would have Iscariot made a saint, and a day set apart for him in the calendar, and that day should be the 7th of March, the day of Webster's betrayal of Freedom for the good-will of the South.

Sumner wrote him: —

> May you live a thousand years, always preaching the truth of Fast Day! That sermon is a noble effort. It stirred me to the bottom of my heart. . . . You have placed the Commissioner in an immortal pillory. . . .

That was what Parker meant to do, then, for Commissioner Curtis, and later for Commissioner Loring and the whole Curtis family. That was the purpose of his terrible invective, which some excellent people have deplored. And his success was equal to his hope. Besides, he wished to make the complicity with slavery as hateful as he could, and here again he was wise in his generation. Strangely enough, the same month that saw the return of Sims saw the election of Sumner to the United States Senate. Parker wrote him a noble letter, — one of hundreds with which he sought to hold our public men to the realization of their most exigent ideals, — in which he said: —

> You see, my dear Sumner, that I expect much of you, and that I expect heroism of the most heroic kind. . . . Yours is a place of great honor, of great trust, but of prodigious peril, and of that there will be few to warn you as I do now; few to encourage you as I gladly would.

In this manner of address there is Parker's consciousness of his own moral weight, but it did not exceed the fact, nor was it misinterpreted by those to whom he wrote. He did not often waste his noble confidence upon ignoble men.

At this point we are reminded that Parker's disengagement from the Unitarian body was not so complete as it is commonly imagined to have been. The Boston Association, which had frozen him out from its most Christian fellowship, was not by any means exhaustive of the Unitarian

body. He was a life member of the American Unitarian Association, and went sometimes to its meetings. He attended annually the meetings of the Berry Street Conference, an exclusively ministerial body, to whose essays and debates reporters were not admitted. We are indebted to Parker himself for a report of the meeting of May, 1851. The subject, "The Duty of Ministers under the Fugitive Slave Law," was introduced by Rev. S. J. May at a business meeting of the Unitarian Association and refused a hearing. At the Berry Street Conference, May 29th, Dr. Osgood, of New York, spoke in defense of Dr. Dewey, who had been reported as saying that he would send back his *mother* into slavery rather than have the Union dissolved. "He had said his *son* or his *brother*." Parker insisted that the principle was the same whichever word was used.[1] When at length he got the floor, ringing familiar changes upon the kidnapping of his parishioners by Dr. Gannett's, and on his difficulties in writing sermons with one eye

[1] Dr. Dewey's remark was one of those which Parker never tired of worrying. He insisted on its grossest form, and wrote in his journal that Dr. Dewey would have done what he said. This showed his ignorance of the man, whose unfortunate expression was simply an hyperbole spontaneously caught up to express Dr. Dewey's sense of the evils that would attend a disruption of the Union. He said to Dr. Furness, "Brother Furness, you have taken the easy road to duty. It is for me to take the hard and difficult way." We can understand that now. I do not wonder that Parker could not in 1851. It was my privilege to know Dr. Dewey well in his old age, and I do not believe that he would have given over a fugitive to the slave-catcher any sooner than Parker, whatever might happen to the Union of these States.

on the loaded pistol on his desk or the sword-hilt protruding from its drawer,[1] he said, with much beside, contrasting the evils of disunion with those of slavery: —

> The fugitive slave law is one which contradicts the acknowledged precepts of the Christian religion, universally acknowledged. It violates the noblest instincts of humanity; it asks us to trample on the law of God. It commands what nature, religion, and God alike forbid; it forbids what nature, religion, and God alike command. It tends to defeat the object of all just human law; it tends to annihilate the observance of the law of God.

Rather than have a single fugitive slave sent back he would see the Union dissolved, till there was not a fragment left so large as Suffolk County.

In all the political speeches, sermons, and addresses of these years we find, as in Parker's theological discourses, many repetitions, much redundancy, a rhetoric extremely loose and negligent, with many a purple patch. Partly the result of crowded haste, these things were partly deliberate or instinctively well done. His sermons were not written to be read. They were built on the proverbial lines: "Does it read well? Then it was a poor speech:" a proverb not of universal application. We cannot fairly judge in cold blood what was spoken in hot, and with the man behind the words, driving them home with all the weight of his compact and massive personality. He had

[1] Ellen Craft being concealed in his house.

the prophetic tone and spoke as one moved by the Holy Ghost. Moreover, for much of Parker's repetition we must look to his ever-shifting audience, and his awareness of this condition, and his anxiety to deliver his whole gospel to those who might never come again.

The year 1852 brought no fugitive slave case, but Daniel Webster died October 23d, and Parker felt that necessity was laid upon him to speak of him in intellectual and moral habit as he was. The sermon was preached in the Melodeon, October 31st, three weeks before the change to Music Hall. The printed form, dated March 7, 1853, is longer than the spoken sermon, but that was from two to three hours long. The writing was begun on Wednesday, 11 A. M., and finished on Saturday at 2 P. M. But the preparation for it had been going on for years. The day of its delivery is set down in his journal as "a sad and dreadful day." At the outset he told the overflowing congregation that he should be long, but promised them that they should not sit uneasily in their chairs. That depended on their view of Webster. If any of his friends were there they must have suffered much. There was unmeasured reprobation for their idol, blended with the loftiest admiration and the warmest love. Passages of exquisite tenderness alternated with terrible denunciations. There were sentences of memorable note: —

Mr. Webster stamped his foot and broke through into the great hollow of practical atheism which under-

gulfs the Church and State. Then what a caving in was there! . . . Ecclesiastical quicksand ran down the hole amain. Metropolitan churches toppled and pitched and canted and cracked, their bowed walls all out of plumb. Colleges, broken from the chain which held them in the stream of time, rushed toward the abysmal rent.

What a Miltonic sentence, not less so for particular defects, was that in which he described the complicity of the North with Slavery! —

Slavery, the most hideous snake which Southern regions breed, with fifteen unequal feet, came crawling North; fold on fold, and ring on ring, and coil on coil the venomed monster came: then Avarice, the foulest worm which Northern cities gender in their heat, went crawling South; with many a wriggling curl it wound along its way. At length they met, and twisting up in their obscene embrace, the twain became one monster. . . . There was no North, no South; they were one poison.

What a passage is that beginning "Do men mourn for him?" and that describing his last days, when "his great oxen were driven up that he might smell their healthy breath, and look his last into those broad, generous faces that were never false to him!"

It was an astonishing funeral oration. Boston wondered at it then, and wonders at it to this day. Many critics have come up against it, but they have done it little harm. Its essential truth has not been successfully impeached, be the question one of Webster's private character or public worth.

No other life or essay or oration has given so true an estimate upon the whole. Nevertheless it may be cheerfully conceded that a sincere passion for the Union as a glorious ideal united with Webster's hankering for the presidency to forward a catastrophe which arrived when, "long leaning, he leaned over and fell down." Moreover, Parker, being theoretically a states-rights man,[1] could not appreciate the value of Webster's great speeches in the thirties against Hayne and Calhoun on the nature of the Union as an indissoluble bond. There came a time before Parker had been one year dead when those speeches were as a great sea-wall, against which the doctrine of secession broke in hopeless rage.

May 24, 1854, Anthony Burns, another fugitive slave, was arrested in Boston on a false charge of burglary and confined in the same Court House in which Sims had received injustice, "old stiff-necked Lemuel [Shaw] visibly going under the chains" that were hung about it to keep out the people, and Parker climbing over them as best he could. The clatter of those chains sounded in many a linked argument of Parker's, long drawn out. The story of the Burns rendition, and of Parker's efforts to prevent it, and the consequences to him flowing from it, would easily fill a chapter or a book. On May 25th, Burns, manacled and guarded, was brought before Commissioner Loring, and the "descent into

[1] "I have thought if any State wished to go, she had a natural right to do so." Berry Street Conference speech.

hall," was being made practically easy for the prisoner when Parker, with others of the Vigilance Committee, forced his way into the courtroom, and after some little speech with Burns demanded that he have counsel. Richard H. Dana followed up Parker so silently that the commissioner was forced to yield. The hearing was fixed for May 27th, but on the evening of the 26th there was a meeting in Faneuil Hall, and not only a meeting but a scheme, for setting the great audience,[1] while to overwhelm the Court House guard and carry off the prisoner. Parker's speech was well adapted to the end in view, but the scheme miscarried. The immensity of the crowd prevented any communication between the conspirators upon the platform and those in the gallery or on the floor. Parker, waiting in vain for a signal from the latter, lost his hold upon the situation and declared the vote to be for meeting at the Court House the next morning at nine o'clock. Given his usual agility, he would have declared the vote according to the heart's desire, and hurled the throng on the Court House, where, at the moment, there was but a corporal's guard of the right sort to do the necessary work. Failure was inevitable. Not even Mr. Alcott could prevent it, standing on the Court House steps, armed with his customary cane, and saying very quietly, "Why are we not within?"

To exaggerate Parker's disappointment and chagrin

[1] "The largest I ever saw in that hall," wrote Wendell Phillips.

grin would be impossible. Lewis Hayden firing a shot in Higginson's defense, it passed between Marshal Freeman's arm and his body. When Parker heard of this he wrung his hands and cried, "Why did n't it hit him!" All that legal ingenuity could devise was done to save the prisoner, but on June 2d he was marched out of Boston, over the spot where the first Boston Massacre in 1770 had taken place and Garrison had been dragged by "gentlemen of property and standing" in 1835. Parker had written another placard summoning the whole population to "turn out and line the streets and look upon the shame and disgrace of Boston." It was so done. Moreover many of the houses, as advised by the Vigilance Committee, were hung with black, and the bells were generally tolled.

One man had been killed at the Court House, how or by whom has never been found out. Unfortunately he was on the wrong side and no martyr-stuff was in him. Not for this circumstance, but "for obstructing, resisting, and opposing the execution of the law," Judge B. R. Curtis — best known for having opposed, further on, the Dred Scott decision of Judge Taney — charged the grand jury to indict such as were found so doing, and indictments were ultimately found against Parker, Phillips, Higginson, and four others. The trial was fixed for April 3, 1855, and Parker spent much time preparing his defense in expectation of some serious business. Good counsel were engaged: John P. Hale and Charles M. Ellis for Parker; John

A. Andrew and others for the rest. The day arrived, Parker's counsel moved that the indictment be quashed, and after a brief argument the court pronounced that it be so, as badly framed.

Such was Parker's *gaudium certaminis* that he would doubtless have preferred a trial. What he could do, he did. He elaborated and published the "Defence" he had prepared. "This little book," as Parker called it in a letter sent with it to Dr. George R. Noyes, is in reality a book of 221 royal, if I should not say imperial, octavo pages. Its 125,000 words would make a book of 500 pages such as this. It is, by way of argument and illustration, a history of American pro-slavery aggression and of the corruption of English judges by the power by which they stand or fall. The fullness of its legal knowledge would have shamed the judges on the bench. Parker's genius for invective and for personal denunciation attained its acme in his handling of the Curtis family, — associated more infamously than any other with the subserviency of Boston to the slave-oligarchy of the South, — and Commissioner Loring. But the "Defence" lost more than half its pungency and popular effect in losing all its practical utility. Publicly delivered, as Parker would have delivered it, it would have been one of the most memorable appeals for justice ever delivered to a court. Parker might well expect that it would bring upon him actions for libel, but those whom he had lashed with scorpions conceived that prudence was the better part of valor.

## CHAPTER X

### THE MINISTER AT LARGE

"PARKER'S life was so large and robust," says Colonel Higginson,[1] "that it rather included the anti-slavery movement than accentuated it." What is certain is that his anti-slavery activity did not exhaust his energy, however it might limit its expression upon special lines. What suffered most was the intended book upon the Development of Religion. There was no slackening of his interest in his preaching of a reformed theology. Such preaching, and the performance of parochial tasks abounding in all kindly offices of personal encouragement and consolation, were the main haunt of his imagination and desire. Often in the journal or his letters do we come upon a note of lamentation with respect to the inexorable demands made on him by his anti-slavery work. But the record without this was singularly full and rich. His lectures here and there, though numerous, were so arranged that he but seldom failed of being in his own pulpit at the appointed day and hour, though the amount of travel necessary to meet this end was great and wearisome. His lists of sermon-

[1] Private Letter: June 18, 1899.

subjects, prospective and realized, during the great anti-slavery years, show a large proportion of theological, ethical, and religious subjects, while of those concerned immediately with the unfolding public tragedy there was no serious lack. Such was the amplitude of his resources that these lists often anticipated a year's work or more; one of them looked ahead four years. During his short vacations he was generally impatient to get back again to his pulpit: —

> When Saturday night comes, I feel a little uneasiness, solemn emotions of awe and wonder and delight spring to consciousness. I don't feel quiet, but wish I were to preach to-morrow; and on Sunday night I feel a little dissatisfied that I have not preached.

It was a grief to him that he could not supplement his Boston preaching with a more effective church organization. There was a Committee of Benevolent Action, and twice a year collections were taken for its use. The committee met regularly from October to May, and kept a record of its meetings and its work. Individual members of the society were generally enlisted in the ranks of one or more of the great reforms. One of Parker's "worlds not realized" was an organization of committees upon one or another of these reforms that should gather up all the members of the society. In public, but oftener in a private way, Parker instigated his people to helpful action where there was some special need. They were not rich, and more than once we find Parker insisting on the

reduction of his salary, in 1847 from $2000 to $1600. When there was money to be raised for a fugitive slave, or any good purpose, Parker's habit was to set the pace himself, wherein he was both generous and shrewd.

Tender associations with Sunday-school work, and a profound conviction that "Christian nurture" was all that Bushnell painted it, made Parker desirous of a Sunday-school connected with the Twenty-Eighth, but neither of two separate endeavors met with good success, though he gave to them his personal oversight, being always present at the meetings. Here was a failure which, as time went on, cost him some valued friends, whose children going to the Sunday-schools of this or that neighborhood detached their parents from Parker's society and attached them to some other. For several years he maintained a Sunday afternoon class to which he expounded the New Testament after the manner of the higher criticism as it was then putting forth its tender green. Those slow to hear and swift to speak came with the rest and gave Parker ample opportunity to "suffer fools gladly," or as best he could.

Few are the ministers who on Saturday afternoons are so disengaged from the next day's sermon that they can abandon themselves to other things. But Parker's sermon was often finished before Saturday, and on Saturday afternoons, for several years, he invited the women of his society to meet in his study for conversation on moral and

religious subjects. He steered the stream of talk with much skill and prudence, and gave a final summing up, often surprising to the speakers; they did not know that they had been so wise. A whole winter was given to educational problems; questions of women's duties, rights, and opportunities were squarely met; intellectual habits were studied and the various lessons of experience. One good reporter remembered with particular satisfaction a conversation on the isolation of Jesus, and his misfortune in having no intellectual or moral superiors to encounter.

Parker's informal extrusion from the Boston Association has, we have seen, too often been imputed to him for total disconnection with the Unitarian denomination, in which the local clique failed to present the type of the denominational mind. Beyond the Dorchester mountains there were people, some of them Unitarian ministers, who welcomed Parker to their pulpits, and with their friendly intimacy and correspondence comforted his lonely heart. Then, too, there were such gatherings as those of the Berry Street Conference and the American Unitarian Association, which drew their constituency from the whole area of the denomination, much narrower then than it is now. We have met him at the Berry Street Conference and seen that he went habitually to its meetings. Similar was his attitude towards the American Unitarian Association. Of this in 1853 Dr. Lothrop was president, the same who was the first Unita-

rian to publicly denounce the South Boston sermon. In May of that year the Executive Committee of the Association presented a report which attacked Parker so directly that more easily could the Ethiopian change his skin than he could have refrained from making a reply. Such was the character of the document that it excited his sense of humor more than his righteous indignation. It contained a creed, or statement of belief, written with a rhetorical ardor hardly to be expected in such a formal declaration. Enumerating the clogs impeding the numerical advance of the denomination and the sources of the odium which it incurred, one of the chief was found to be "the excessive radicalism and irreverence of some who have stood within our own circle," who "have seemed to treat the holy oracles and the endeared forms of our common religion with contempt." The creed which followed the general statement of the condition which prevailed was designed to enlighten those whom these dangerous persons had deceived. It was stupendous in comparison with the Preamble[1] of 1865, which was the maximum of creed then tolerable, or in comparison with the Preamble by which that was displaced in 1894. It asserted a "profound belief in the Divine origin, the Divine authority, the Divine sanctions of the religion of Jesus Christ;" that God "did raise up Jesus to aid in our redemption from sin, did by him pour a

[1] To the Constitution of the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches.

fresh flood of purifying life through the withered veins of humanity and along the corrupted channels of the world, and is by his religion forever sweeping the nations with regenerating gales from heaven and visiting the hearts of men with celestial solicitations." Other clauses declared the "supernatural appointment of Jesus as a messenger from God," "the supernatural authority of Christ as a teacher, his divine mission as a Redeemer," and "his moral perfection as an example;" also that the Bible furnishes "an authentic and reliable record of his life, character, death and resurrection."

The loose but shining armor of this elaborate exposition was most inviting to that same Socratic spear which Parker had used effectively in his encounter with the Boston Association. He criticised its "damaged phraseology,"—a favorite expression with him, if not invented by him as is commonly believed, — demanding the meaning of such language as "Christ's sacrifice and intercession," "the withered veins of humanity," "divine authority," and "infallible truth." He could not agree with the Report that "the ultimate fate of the impenitent wicked is shrouded in impenetrable obscurity." To distrust it was to distrust the perfect love of God. His questions numbered twenty-eight, each one of them lodging somewhere in the hull of the three-decker, which, because of such perforation, or some fatal leak where rotten timber had been used in its construction, rolled over heavily and went

to the bottom like a stone. It was the most elaborate attempt at creed-making in which the Unitarians ever have engaged, and it was not encouraging to such undertakings. But the kindly formularist bore Parker no ill-will, and soon went over to his side; at his death pronouncing a generous eulogy upon him.

The professional reformer was a type which did not attract Parker, and there was no tendency to realize it in his character or his career. Nevertheless he was deeply interested in the various reforms which marked his period, and would have been more active in his service of those which attracted him next after anti-slavery if this had not made such exorbitant demands upon him. There was nothing of the fanatic, little of the enthusiast, in his concern with war or temperance or penal legislation or the condition of women. To the reforms upon these lines, as to the anti-slavery reform, he brought a sober common sense that was sometimes irritating to the more sanguine heralds and champions of the "good time coming." He, too, believed that it was coming, but not right away. He did not find a speedy dawn of the millennium upon the cards. He had his visions, but that of Satan falling like lightning from his immemorial throne was not one of them. Thoroughly optimistic, he was so at long range, having no faith in panaceas for the regeneration of society. If there was one note that recurred oftener than any other in his preaching it was that of the Divine Immanence in mat-

ter and in man. He never tired of celebrating the natural or human aspect of this truth. But Martineau had little reason for anxiety lest at this point a genial pantheism should swallow up the individual mind and will. His statement was: "God is infinite; therefore he is immanent in nature, yet transcending it; immanent in spirit, yet transcending that. He must fill each point of spirit as of space; matter must unconsciously obey; man, conscious and free, has power to a certain extent to disobey, but, obeying, the immanent God acts in man as much as in nature." Hence inspiration. If the conditions are fulfilled, it seems that inspiration comes in proportion to a man's gifts and his use of those gifts.

Here was the saving clause. It was, perhaps, illogical; a contradiction of his affirmation of the Divine Immanence "at each point of spirit." But it was Parker's uniform statement, and consequently man was no passive bucket in the stream of infinite soul, but he had "verge and room for the measureless expansion" of his intellectual and active powers. God was "a good worker," in Parker's scheme of thought, but he "liked to be helped," and with all his working and man's help the rate of progress was, if not discouragingly slow, still very slow indeed.

In 1848 he signed a call for an Anti-Sabbath Convention which was written by Mr. Garrison. The object was to distinguish the Christian Sunday from the Jewish Sabbath, and save what was

best in either while letting what was harmful or merely superstitious go. In the event some were for throwing out the baby with the bath, and Parker found himself "too radical for the conservatives, too conservative for the radicals, and so between two fires, — *cross*-fires too." Garrison's resolutions passed, Parker voting for some of them, against others. His own set were so severely criticised by Garrison, Pillsbury, Foster and Lucretia Mott that he did not urge their acceptance. They were all wise and moderate, the fifth such that it accuses our present Sunday manners much more generally than those of 1848: —

> That we should lament to see Sunday devoted to *labor* or to *sport;* for though we think all days are equally holy, we yet consider that the custom of devoting one day in the week to spiritual culture is still of great advantage to mankind.

His temperance principles did not commend him to the "teetotalers" or prohibitionists. Total abstinence was his own rule until his physicians insisted on its abrogation. But temperance was to him a better way than total abstinence for those who were able to receive it. He would have questioned the alcohol-poison argument of the school-book hygienists which is now much in vogue. A study of consumption in his own family convinced him that intemperance was a fearful cure for the disease, which might however reassert itself in the children of the intemperate. He thought Horace Mann a victim to his intemperate total abstinence, and that

Garrison, Phillips, and Samuel J. May all needed a little wine for their stomachs' sakes and their often infirmities.

When the Maine Law first went into operation he theorized that it was "an invasion of private right, but for the sake of preserving the rights of all." It was chaining up a dangerous beast. Believing that men "who use stimulants moderately live longer and have a sounder old age than the teetotalers," he was nevertheless convinced that nine tenths of the alcohol used was abused, and wrote, "The evil is so monstrous, so patent, so universal, that it becomes the duty of the State to take care of its citizens; the whole of its parts." Could he have lived to see the ultimate working of State prohibition his opinion might have undergone a serious change. He wrote of the Maine Law, "It makes the whole State *an asylum for the drunkard.*" Too true, in a quite different sense from that intended. It makes a drunkards' paradise. Without public sentiment behind it, the law is void or of no praiseworthy effect. "Local option," which insures the public sentiment behind the law, is a different matter, and has registered successes that would have delighted Parker's soul.

As the grandson of Captain John Parker it was hardly possible for Parker to join the non-resistants of his day. Moreover, he recognized the provisional function of war in the evolution of humanity and believed that there were modern devils which could best be fought with this par-

ticular fire. Yet he was, as we have seen, a careful student of war in all its sociological, politico-economic and humanitarian aspects. He thought it useless nine times out of ten. But he would not have advised that only roughs and toughs be sent to fight. Rather that there should be no wars not good enough to deserve the proud self-sacrifice of such men as his own Colonel Shaw. One of his first letters to Sumner was written after a second reading of Sumner's "True Grandeur of Nations" in 1845. It was a letter of emphatic commendation. Slaveholding would not have been more impossible for him than his support of a war, like the Mexican, for the extension of slavery, or one for the extension of Christianity in heathen parts. Yet into the great war of 1861 he would probably have entered with all his mind and with all his soul and with all his strength.

He regarded capital punishment as "a terrible sin," and questions of prison discipline had permanent interest for him. He studied them carefully, and in his "Perishing Classes of Boston," and elsewhere, discussed them in a large, illuminative fashion. He anticipated the modern criticism on the herding of criminals, calling the Reform School at Westboro', Mass., "a school of crime."

"The woman question," as he apprehended it, was not a simple one. Whether women should have the suffrage was but a little part of it. Of their right to this he was convinced: less perfectly that society would be a gainer by their exercise of

it; far less that such exercise would set all things right. As more affectionate than men, and as more intuitional, he regarded women as men's superiors, but he could be critical of their concrete development. To questions of marriage and divorce he gravitated with persistent interest. Womanhood was so sacred in his eyes that prostitution was to him an unspeakable tragedy. One of his earlier letters to Colonel Higginson is on the blank leaf of a circular describing an association for the protection of girls from idleness and temptation. It antedated the unfavorable opinion of the school at Westboro' quoted above. It demanded a similar school for girls. He wrote many letters to Charles Loring Brace concerning Brace's work in New York, and went there to make a study of his methods and results. His personal relation to individual misery and crime was compact of sweet humanity. In a very real and vital sense he believed in the humanity of Jesus. He believed in it so much, and in such a way, that his own heart was full of it and overflowed with beautiful compassion for all suffering and sinful folk.

Society presented itself to Parker, roughly, as commercial, ecclesiastical, political, and domestic, and in many sermons of great thoroughness and power he held up the ideal possibilities upon these several lines in contrast with the actual conditions. No estimate of his reformatory work would be complete which did not include the simplest homi-

lies with which he searched the hearts of his habitual hearers or the most casual upon the human tide which every Sunday morning set towards Music Hall.

If there ever was a minister at large, an œcumenical bishop, a man of various activity and far-reaching influence, that man was Theodore Parker. His interest in reformatory measures went but a little way to satisfy the claims he made upon himself as the pastor of other sheep than those of his own fold. The publication of his ideas in one printed form or another went but a little way to make up what seemed to him to be lacking in his pulpit labors and others of a local character. Before his death less than a dozen volumes of his writings were published, including the De Wette "Introduction." Five others were collections of sermons, speeches, and addresses. But these volumes were the smaller part of his publication. He was as much a pamphleteer as Voltaire or De Foe or Thomas Paine. A list of his books and pamphlets received at the Boston Athenæum chiefly from the writer, between 1841 and 1857, includes forty-two titles. An imperfect list of his pamphlets collected by Mrs. Parker includes thirty-four titles. Some of these had wide circulation. His friends, however, were not satisfied, and I find T. W. Higginson in 1855 urging upon him a scheme for their wider circulation, and that of his books also.[1] Nothing came

[1] The *Discourse* had a great circulation in England, from 40,000 to 50,000; in America only 2500 in a dozen years, it being a large and costly book.

of this, through Parker's fear of injuring publishers who had been brave enough to print his books. The "Dial" and the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review" furnished other avenues of approach to the public, but, like wisdom's narrow path, with only "here and there a traveler." A genial Cambridge scholar used to speak of his own articles in the "Unitarian Review" as "printed, not published," and Parker might have anticipated the sorry joke where his magazine articles were in question. To Unitarian editors he was not *persona grata*, at either the "Register" or "Examiner" office. After a silence of seventeen years he again speaks in the latter, volume 64, the article an elaborate review of Buckle's "History of Civilization," followed in volume 65 by an exhaustive presentation of the Material Condition of the People of Massachusetts." Dr. Hedge had taken the editorial helm and Parker was pathetically pleased to be one of his crew.[1] His enemies upon the daily and weekly press could be relied upon to report (oftener to misreport) his significant utterances. For friendly service of this kind his best reliance was on the "Liberator." I have in hand a careful list made by Mr. W. P. Garrison of Parker's matter in the "Liberator" from 1846 until 1860. There are ninety-seven titles, covering for the most part extracts from his speeches and sermons. The New York "Tribune" and the New York "Anti-

[1] In volume 51 he has three learned paragraphs on Mosheim, Du Cange, and Jal.

Slavery Standard" afforded similar help. But evidently there was some further agency required if he would bring home his message to the people of America in a manner proportionate to its importance to their welfare, so far as he could judge from its insistent pressure on his own mind and heart.

The lyceum lectureship, as organized in the fourth and fifth decades of the century, did much in answer to his crying need. Neither itinerant lecturing nor anti-slavery preaching or committee work was his heart's desire. He would fain have been a quiet scholar and a teacher of reformed religion. He wrote in 1851, "I would never preach on a political matter again if it were consistent with my duty to avoid it;" and in the same letter, "I was meant for a philosopher, and the times call for a *stump orator*." The times knew the man better than he knew himself. He was one of the most effective of the lecturers who made the Lyceum in its day a power for intellectual and moral elevation in America. Less popular than Beecher or Chapin, less brilliant than Phillips, having neither the boisterous humor of Gough nor Curtis's resistless charm, he had more mass than any one of these, with whom he shared the highest honors of the field. Lecturing was with him a very serious matter, and he gave to it careful preparation. If the sermons and the lectures helped each other, neither was worse on that account. It was a high compliment that he paid to the intelligence of his hearers when he brought them such weighty mat-

ter, but it was well deserved. "I have always remembered," writes Colonel Higginson, "a certain lecture on the Anglo-Saxon as the most wonderful instance that ever came within my knowledge of the adaptation of solid learning to the popular intellect. Nearly two hours of almost unadorned fact, — for there was far less than usual of relief and illustration, — and yet the lyceum audience listened to it as if an angel sang to them."

The lyceum lecture was seldom directly theological or political, but a *suppressio veri* was for Parker's conscience so near to a *suggestio falsi* that he seldom got through a lecture without insinuating the essential quality of his theological and political creed. One of his lectures, which I have analyzed in a previous chapter, was a careful exposition of Transcendentalism. Many of them dealt with educational ideas and questions of good government, the status of women, and other aspects of reform. They were mainly sociological; sometimes literary; sometimes biographical. The best of the last mentioned were the four called, as printed together, "Historic Americans." These were written for the "Parker Fraternity," which was instituted by the members of the Twenty-Eighth Society for social purposes and to give Parker that chance to be heard in Boston as a lecturer which was denied him by the regular dispensaries. The "Jefferson" was never given; the other three, "Franklin," "Washington," and "Adams," were given in October, 1858, the last

good working month of Parker's life.[1] They are all wonderfully fresh and strong, studied and written carefully, the "Franklin" twice rewritten, illustrating his equal passion for facts and for ideas. There is no sentimental idealization, but a brave attempt to see each character, in intellectual and moral habit, as it was. It is eloquent for his breadth of sympathy and appreciation that he regarded Franklin as the greatest of the four, despite his lack of elevation and his adhesion to that philosophical system — the sensational — for which Parker had but scant respect. The lectures intended more than information. They were meant to illustrate those principles which were imbedded in the foundations of our government and to demand obedience to them as essential to all true success. It was not yet time to flout those principles as good enough for the day of small things, but superseded by a civilization glorying in the long distance telephone and the lyddite shell. There was no wrenching of the facts to his conclusions. Their most obvious implications were sufficient to enmesh such prowlers in the jungle of contemporary politics as were required for his menagerie.

The contraction of his preaching-field by the hostility of the local clergy was fundamental to

[1] As if divining his fatal illness, he made only one lecture engagement for the season of 1858–59, and that was to lecture in my own Brooklyn church, November 10, 1858. He was then just recovering from a painful operation and could barely walk, so that the engagement was not kept, and the new church building missed what would have been a second consecration.

his resort to lecturing as a means of bringing the message of which he was profoundly conscious to bear upon the popular mind. During the winter following his return from Europe, 1844–45, he lectured forty times. For many years there are no data. In the middle fifties he kept a careful account of his engagements, with time tables, plans of lecture tours, correspondents, and finally lists of the lectures that were given and the gross and net amounts received. These were not large, for the ground covered and the labor done. In 1853–54 he lectured fifty-eight times; in 1854–55 sixty-eight, and the net proceeds were $1394.77. The season of 1855–56 was the top-notch. He lectured ninety-eight times and the net proceeds were $1783.96. The next season there was a falling off to seventy-one, caused by sickness and absorption in the Kansas troubles. The fees were often liberal for the ante-bellum time, $50 or more, but the average was pulled down by lectures whose virtue was their own reward. When the receipts were but one dollar and the expenses were sixty cents the lecturer's honor was without much profit. Once he discovers that he had repeated a lecture of the year before, and declines the proffered fee when going again to the same place. Severe and noble was the conscientiousness with which he defended the Music Hall preaching against the invasion of his lectures on the order of his life. They were given in New England for the most part, and so timed as to permit of his return to Boston for his

Sunday sermon, though much of the sermon was often written on the cars. Writing William R. Herndon, the law partner of Abraham Lincoln, April 17, 1856, he says : —

Your letters — the printed matter not less than the written — rejoice me very much. I honor the spirit that breathes in them all. I did not answer before, for I had no time, and a hundred letters lie before me now not replied to. When I tell you that I have lectured eighty-four times since November 1st, and preached at home every Sunday but two, when I was in Ohio, and have had six meetings a month at my own house and have written more than 1000 letters, besides doing a variety of other work belonging to a minister and scholar, you may judge that I must economize minutes and often neglect a much valued friend.

A few characteristic incidents of his lecturing appear in a letter to Miss Sarah Hunt, one of his most highly valued friends. The letter was written on the cars somewhere in northern New York.

This will be the last winter of my lecturing so extensively (perhaps). Hereafter I will limit my services to forty [1] lectures in a winter, and put my terms, as Chapin does, at F. A. M. E., *i. e.*, Fifty (dollars) And My Expenses.

This business of lecturing is an original American contrivance for educating the people. The world has nothing like it. In it are combined the best things of the Church, *i. e.*, the preaching, and of the College, *i. e.*,

[1] There were only twenty-five for the season 1857–58, and few of them were of Dr. Chapin's kind.

the *informing thought*, with some of the fun of the Theatre. . . . Surely some must dance after so much piping and that of so moving a sort. I can see what a change has taken place through the toil of these missionaries. But none know the hardships of the lecturer's life. . . . In one of the awful nights in winter I went to lecture at ——. It was half charity. I gave up the Anti-slavery Festival, rode fifty-six miles in the cars, leaving Boston at half past four o'clock, and reaching the end of the railroad at half past six — drove seven miles in a sleigh, and reached the house of ——, who had engaged me to come. It was time ; I lectured one hour and three quarters and returned to the house. Was offered no supper before the lecture, and none after, till the sleigh came to the door to take me back again to the railroad station, [town ?] seven miles off, where I was to pass the night and take the cars at half past six the next morning.

Luckily I always carry a few little creature comforts in my wallet. I ate a seed cake or two and a fig, with lumps of sugar. We reached the tavern at eleven, could get nothing to eat at that hour, and, as it was a temperance house, not a glass of ale, which is a good nightcap. It took three quarters of an hour to thaw out : — went to bed at twelve in a cold room, was called up at five, had what is universal — a tough steak, sour bread, potatoes swimming in fat. —— wanted me to deduct from my poor fifteen dollars the expenses of my nocturnal ride, but I " could not make the change." . . .

Monday last at seven, George and I walked down to the Lowell Depot, and at eight started for Rouse's Point, two hundred and eighty-seven miles off ; sick and only fit to lie on a sofa, and have day-dreams of you, sweet absent ones ! and think over again the friendly endearments that are past, but may yet return. A dreadful

hard ride ends at nine P. M., and I find myself in the worst tavern (pretending to decency) in the Northern States. Bread which defies eating, crockery which sticks to your hands, fried fish as cold as when drawn from the lake. Rise at half past four, breakfast (?) at five, off in the cars at half past five, lecture at Malone that night, lie all day on the sofa, ditto at Potsdam next day. The third day, leave Potsdam at nine, and reach Champlain (if I get there) at half past eight, spending ten and a half hours in traveling by railroad ninety-three miles! Thence after lecture to Rouse's Point, and at half past five to-morrow morning return to the cars which are to take me home.

Next week, three days in the "East Counties," and the next four days in Central New York. That, I hope, ends the business, bating nine or ten more in April and May.

But none of these things moved Parker from his conviction that the lecturing was worth all its cost, though it would be little or no exaggeration to say that it cost him his life. It was the miserable discomfort of a particular journey in February, 1857, that was the most obvious beginning of the end. He was not extravagant in his estimate of what the lectures did. There is a letter in which he assumes that in each hundred of his audience he made a real impression on a certain (very small) number. He then multiplies this number by all the hundreds composing his various audiences, and comforts himself with the assurance that a few hundred every year were led by him to larger views of life and a more serious application

to its work. If there was any excess here it was on the side of modesty. More of his seed than he dared hope fell into good ground and bore abundant fruit.

Yet it was, perhaps, Parker's correspondence that made him a successful minister at large more than his lecturing. No man ever gave himself out more freely than did he through this medium. When he writes to Mr. Herndon of one thousand letters written in five months, we are taken but a little way, for a good many of us write as many. And when he writes to the same person of one hundred letters waiting to be answered we are not much impressed; or should not be if we did not know what Parker's letters meant. There are letters and letters, as well as deacons and deacons. Parker's were of many kinds. There were little notes among them, but what is truly remarkable is the number of letters containing thousands of words and great masses of careful exegesis and elaborate information. The multitude of his letters and his correspondents is far less impressive than the prodigality with which he poured himself forth, the patience with which he answered questions which were often trivial, the faithfulness with which he kept up a correspondence with strangers whom he would fain enlighten or encourage, year after year. At this point I let go those letters of the scholar and the thinker in which his correspondence abounds, and those to the political leaders of the time, Sumner, Hale, Seward, Chase,

Mann and others, which were an extension of his anti-slavery word and work, and those of personal friendship which were as numerous and full as if he had nothing to do but write such letters, and address myself for a few pages to those in which he was "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit," who were full of doubts and questionings, for whom the burden of the traditional theology or the horror of great darkness it had left behind was more than they could bear. The letters which came back to him from such correspondents show with what gratitude they received his help. Many were the friendships that began in this way and went on for many years. One of the rarest was with Patience Ford of Dorchester, Mass. Her home minister was Nathaniel Hall, of whom Parker, never lacking in appreciation of a faithful minister, wrote : —

> If there are any pious ministers — and *I* think there are many — he is one, and one of the most excellently pious. . . . He has an unction from the Holy One if any have it nowadays.

Mr. Parker's correspondence with this lady began in 1841, and his last letter to her bears a ten years later date. His own piety never shows more sweetly than in his dealing, at once sympathetic and corrective, with her mystic exaltation. He warns her that she must not "dwell amid the sentimental flowers of religion, charmed by their loveliness and half bewildered by their perfume," but

live an active human life. "We must not only *fly*, but, as we mount up, we must take others on our wings; for God gives one more strength than the rest only that he may therewith help the weak."

A series of letters to Robert White, Jr., of New York, is beautiful with Parker's patience towards a type of thought with which he had no sympathy. Mr. White, whose daughter Anna is now presiding over the Shaker community at New Lebanon, was an uncle of Richard Grant White. He was a non-resident Shaker. Parker's answers to his letters are elaborate, and so much was he attracted to the man whose opinions he broke like butterflies upon his critical wheel, that long before they met Parker's feeling for his correspondent was that of warm affection. The correspondence began in 1848 and continued nine or ten years — till Mr. White's death. One of November 29, 1850, runs:

> The kindness of your letters surprises me as much as their beauty. I thank you for all the generosity of affection which you have always shown for me and extended even to my writings; at the same time you have made a deep impression on my heart, and, though I have never seen your face, yet your character has made an image of your person in my breast which will not depart from me.

Of elaborate letters to orthodox ministers chafing in the traditional harness a series to Rev. M. A. H. Niles, who once preached in Marblehead, afterward in Northampton, is a fair sample, and of the pains he often took with such. One of these,

a letter of six thousand words, goes over the whole ground in dispute between him and orthodoxy. His view of its most terrible dogma is nowhere more pronounced: "To believe the eternal damnation of any one of the human race is to me worse than to believe in the utter annihilation of all; for I take it the infinite damnation of one soul would make immortality a curse to the race." He would have been well-pleased with Robert Buchanan's sentiment: —

> If there is doom for one,
> Thou, Maker, art undone.

Nothing pleased Parker more than to find that he had given light or strength or peace to people of the humbler sort. Among the letters that came to him when he was leaving America in 1859, never to return, was one from John Brown, "a poor blacksmith" in Dutchess County, New York. He wrote: —

> Although we differ somewhat materially in our theological opinions, I have long been an enthusiastical admirer of your talents and virtues as a man, a scholar, and a gentleman. I take this method of conveying to you my heartfelt sympathy. . . . And in so doing I believe (in fact I know it to be so) I 'm expressing the sentiments of hundreds, if not thousands, in the circle of my acquaintance, which is pretty large throughout the State.

With this belongs a series (with the answers) written to a poor fellow in Illinois who almost simultaneously had lost his left hand and his grip

on the popular theology. In the winter of 1854–55 he comes upon Parker's "Discourse" and with it a new spiritual world. He would like to come to Boston, but Parker advises him to stay in Illinois and live down the ill-opinion which his heresies have won for him. His letters show the course of his development from illiterate crudity to no mean culture and power of self-expression. He circulates Parker's books and pamphlets, and "can see a gradual and steadily advancing inquiry after truth." His mind is settled as to his future object in life. "It is my wish to follow in your footsteps and preach to others the truths you have awakened in my mind." But with his one hand he does a farmer's work and can boast of seventeen acres of good corn. In September, 1858, he was sick and nigh to death. "There was no doubt, no fear, but a peaceful happiness came over me." Parker's last letter to him bears the date of December 2, 1858, when his own work was nearly finished. One of his consolations was that he had many such missionaries of his gospel going up and down the land, and others like Peter Robertson, in Scotland, a diligent disseminator of his opinions. They were here and there and everywhere. Rakhal Das Haldar, an intelligent Brahmin, wrote him from India of the interest in his writings wherever there was intelligent conversation on religious topics among his countrymen.

This ministry at large of Parker's correspondence, which did so much to extend his influence

beyond the limits of his spoken word, found in his relations with Frances Power Cobbe one of its finest illustrations. His writings did not convert her from orthodoxy, as one often hears, but confirmed her in opinions she had already formed in 1845 when the "Discourse" first came into her possession. Her mother died soon after, and it was from the help which she then derived from Parker's "Sermon of the Immortal Life" and from his correspondence, which began in 1848, that a friendship took its rise which hardly needed mutual acquaintance to make it a perfect thing. They did not meet till he was standing at death's door. But before that, and especially after, she did more than any one else in Great Britain to make his great salvation known.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEARER VIEW

JANUARY 17, 1847, Parker writes to Mrs. Dall, for many years a valued friend, the more valued because she withstood him to the face when she thought he ought to be blamed: —

> Here I am in Boston; it is Sunday night, the first Sunday night I have passed in Boston these ten years. But for the trouble of removing the household and my books, I should have answered your letter before now.

This means that he had kept on living in West Roxbury for a year after his entire surrender of his Spring Street pastorate. The change was hard for him. He missed the open fields, the stroll across lots to the Russells and the Shaws, the tending and keeping of his own plot of ground. To get back there for a day always made a bright spot on his journal's page, unless the dearest friend that he had left behind happened to be away. The new Boston home was in Exeter Place, the house touching gardens with that of Wendell Phillips. It was a roomy house, but not sufficiently so for the books which overflowed it from top to bottom before long. In West Roxbury he had made the cases with his

own hands, and, if these did not go to Boston, others quite as simple served for the most part. The whole of the fourth floor was given up to them, and from thence the inundation poured downstairs, filling the bath-room on the way, pausing reluctant only at the kitchen door. At one angle of his desk stood Thorwaldsen's head of Jesus, at another a bronze Spartacus.[1] On the same shelf with these there was often a vase of flowers. There were those who knew how much he loved them, and they kept him well supplied. The window near his desk gave unobstructed light, but the others were green with ivies and other plants on which he lavished wise and tender care. Hunting for wild flowers in their known haunts was one of his most exquisite delights. He knew just when the violets should bloom upon his mother's grave in the old burying ground in Lexington, and they seldom failed to keep their tryst with him.

There were two members of the family besides Mr. and Mrs. Parker. He wrote to Miss Cobbe in 1857: —

A young man by the name of Cabot, one and twenty years old, lives with us. We have brought him up from infancy. . . . An unmarried lady, a little more than fifty years old — Miss [Hannah] Stevenson — a woman of fine talents and culture, interested in all the literatures

[1] Nearer his hand there was a little covered wooden vase or urn in which he kept red wafers. It was made from the oak of Old Ironsides and was given to him by Caroline Thayer. Mrs. Parker finally gave it back to Miss Thayer, who at once gave it to me with words more precious than the thing.

and humanities, is with us. These are the permanent family to which visitors make frequent and welcome additions.

By that last sentence hangs a tale of various incidents. The Parkers were given to hospitality. The casual friend was always dropping in and finding irresistible the cordial invitation to "the breaking of bread." If sometimes it was the rich neighbor, it was oftener the maimed, the halt, the lame and the blind, the scholar or adventurer from overseas, some revolutionist of '48 or black man in distress. The spare bed was in constant requisition. Those who came hungering for "better bread than could be made of wheat" were also fed. In the privacy of the study many sorrows and anxieties were poured into a patient ear; many failures were confessed and many burdens were relieved. We read of a husband and wife going to him separately with their domestic trouble and finding out long after that both had got the help that made them one again from the same friend; also of a young Scot whose encyclical letter was addressed "to some Christian minister in America," and who, paradoxical as it may seem, was advised that Parker was his man. The book, the pleasure, the sermon was put aside to answer any human cry. Delightful was the prospect of a New Hampshire outing kindly planned for him when he was tired and sick, but there came a poor colored woman asking him to attend her baby's funeral and the pleasant hope was cheerfully resigned.

Between nine and ten in the evening he often took a little rest, slipping down into the parlor to chat with those who might be there. That was his time for cutting the leaves of new books, at the same time reading them as by some special gift. Doubts being expressed as to what he could get in that way, he challenged examination, and it was discovered that somehow the book had passed into his mind. His writing also was a mystery. Weiss writes of complaints of its illegibility as early as 1841, but I find that, while in his Divinity School days it was stiff and boyish, hardly had he settled in West Roxbury before it had taken on that hieroglyphic character which meant confusion for the printers and his friends. Sometimes there was flat rebellion in the printer's office: "Metcalf absolutely refuses to print from your handwriting; it must be copied, or he must be paid double." And again: "In this respect I think you sometimes abuse your privileges. A man so ready to avow his opinions in speech ought not to conceal them so cunningly when he writes."

The uniqueness of his public station left unspoiled the gentle pieties of his personal life. Every morning, after breakfast, a portion of Scripture was read, and it was not omitted on that morning when he was setting out for the West Indies and a more distant bourne. One of his habits was perversely clerical. Black broadcloth was his only wear. Questioned about it, he explained that, where he must say and do so many

things which gave offense, it seemed best to "go with the multitude" where there was no principle at stake. Sufficiently self-assertive in the main, he was ever ready to efface himself when by so doing he could help a worthy cause, and to serve them better he withheld his name from many enterprises of which he was the originating force.

Every Sunday evening there was a general welcome to his friends,[1] which brought them together in good numbers, filling the rooms sometimes to overflowing, and few were those who went away without a sense of some personal contact with Parker over and above the average pleasantness to make them glad that they had gone and determine them to go again. His exuberance at these social gatherings was inexhaustible. To the scholar he gave his learning, to the reformer his sympathy, to the young student encouragement and good advice, sincerity and simplicity to all. It was in smaller companies that his frolic temper had full swing. One of his favorite diversions was the doings of the "Sirty," an imaginary club of which Edward Everett was "a dog-day member," and to which Dr. Parkman and other dignitaries belonged. The scheme was fertile in absurdities in which there was little of real wit or humor, but much kindly laughter, with many execrable puns. He let himself

[1] Among whom came Mrs. Howe with an ill opinion of Garrison, and soon found herself singing from the same hymn-book with him, he nothing like so black as her new Boston friends had painted him.

go in many of his letters in the same nonsensical fashion. Sometimes it meant a merry heart; sometimes, like Lincoln's gayety, an inward wound that must somehow be stanched or keep its secret hid.

Of all his visitors none were more welcome than the little children, who, climbing painfully to his upper floor, and, much out of breath, knocking and crying "Parkie!" "Parkie!" were let in with an unfeigned delight. He might be deep in study or in mid-course of his sermon: for the time being his only care was to entertain his guest. He did that royally. There were toys kept for such visitors, and the great family collection of bears, all complimentary to "Bearsie," as Mrs. Parker was habitually called, was exhibited. For a new-comer there was always one of these to spare. He had pet names for the children, "Bits o' Blossoms," "Mites o' Teants," and one, who grew up to be Boston's first musical critic, was "Hippopotamus," a name of which there were such diminutives and variants as he could invent. When he went lecturing there were never so many books stuffed in his gripsack to be read on the train but that a nook was found for a little bag of candy, whereby fretful children were beguiled, while tired mothers got *their* sweetness in the sympathy of the unknown friend pleading with them to suffer the little children to come unto him. From a chance meeting with a young man on one of these journeys there sprang a correspondence which gave new and better direction to the young man's life.

Parker's relation to young men was always kindly, cordial, sympathetic. From his eighteenth year onward he was always helping one young man or another to get an education. Sometimes it was a girl; once the daughter of his early teacher, Rev. William White, and his letters to her were more precious than the pecuniary help. My friend, Rev. Joseph May, of Philadelphia, a son of Parker's friend, Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, telling his own story, shows very pleasantly what Parker's habits were. To much good advice he added a hair mattress and a costly dictionary of mythology. "Every year, knowing my father's means were small, he sent a considerable check to me to help pay my college bills." With the good outward help went such as could not be expressed in terms of current coin: —

> Of all the influences whatever which have tended to develop in me the *religious* sentiment, the influence of his character, preaching, prayers, was altogether and peculiarly preëminent. It stands out in my consciousness distinct from all others; and it was the influence of character, of which preaching and prayers were only the expression.

A highly characteristic letter is that (*circum* 1858) to two of the Garrison boys, William and Wendell. The elder's part discusses the advantages of a college course for him *versus* a business career. To Wendell, then in college, he writes, "*Literature* is a good *staff* but a poor *crutch*, and reform makes but a poor *profession* for any

one." The following is interesting in comparison with the subsequent careers of the men named herein: —

> I hope your friend Hallowell justifies the high hopes formed of him both in talent and character. Russell and Shaw in the class before you, I hope will do no discredit to their fathers and mothers — old friends of mine. Spaulding I am sure of.

Shaw was Robert G., whose subsequent career is sufficiently indicated by the Shaw Memorial on Boston Common. Hallowell was colonel of the 55th Massachusetts Volunteers, the next colored regiment to Shaw's. Russell was a colonel of Massachusetts Cavalry in the great war; his wife a daughter of the distinguished merchant and patriot, John M. Forbes. A letter from my friend, the Spaulding of this letter (Rev. Henry G.), gives a good idea of Parker's dealings with young men. In 1858 or thereabout Spaulding was rooming in a small, low-studded chamber at the top of a students' boarding-house. There was a heavy step on the stair one evening and a loud knock at the door, and to his "Come in!" entered Theodore Parker, who had heard that he was working his way through college and had come to say that, should he find himself hard pressed at any time, he had a good parishioner who would help him out. Spaulding was very grateful, but thought there would be no occasion for such help. There was, however, a few months later, and Parker was taken at his word. It was a cold and rainy March

day, the streets full of slush and mud, and, in spite of protest, Parker put off his dressing gown and slippers and put on his overcoat and boots and went through the storm to his friend's house; when he had made the student and his friend acquainted taking a gracious leave. After this, Spaulding often took tea with Parker, Sunday evenings. The simple meal concluded, Parker would ask him to go to the piano and play such dear old tunes as "Dundee" and "Brattle Street" and "Naomi" and "St. Martin's." The piano was a gift from his parishioners, whose letter of gift, with their names appended, is one of many similar tokens that I find like flowers between his journal's leaves, keeping their fragrance still.

Parker's interest was very great in those men who were imbued with his liberal spirit and were engaged in religious enterprises of a more or less independent character. Upon his list, "pretty good for a beginning," he counted "Johnson at Lynn, Higginson at Worcester, Kimball at Barre, Longfellow at Brooklyn, Frothingham at Jersey City, May at Syracuse, Mayo at Albany, and William H. Fish in Tompkins County." There are many letters to Mr. Fish, a brave co-worker upon anti-slavery lines. In his invincible old age, he still cherishes among his most precious recollections that of Parker's early sympathy. Kimball at Barre has "left no memorial" except the noble sermon which Parker preached at his installation. I have read all the correspondence between Colonel

Higginson and Parker, back and forth, and it presents a delightful picture of their mutual relations. Each was ready at all times to help on the other's work in any obvious way. Parker was always more than glad to lend Higginson (or any one) his books, or place his great store of knowledge at his service. Higginson was anxious to contrive some means of giving Parker's published writings ampler verge. One of his letters from Parker is addressed "Rev. General Higginson," in token of his militia prophecy of actual service in the field. The last bears the date January 12, 1859, when Parker was about to leave Boston forever.

Many thanks for the offer to help me, but I shall have all in *statu quo*. I have much grass down, not yet made into hay. I know not if it will ever be got into the barn.

That we miss from Parker's list of "Parkerite" preachers the name of David A. Wasson would be more strange if Wasson had been at the time of his writing in charge of a society. Their mutual appreciation was of the warmest kind with one exception: Parker's opinion of Swedenborg was a qualified admiration,[1] Wasson's more thorough-

[1] Letter to Albert Sanford, Esq., August 24, 1853. "Swedenborg has had the fate to be worshiped as a half-god on the one side and on the other to be despised and laughed at. It seems to me that he was a man of genius, wide learning, of deep and genuine piety. But he had an abnormal, queer sort of mind, dreamy, dozy, clairvoyant, Andrew-Jackson-Davisy; and besides he loved opium and strong coffee, and wrote under the influence of those drugs. A wise man may get many nice bits out of him and be

going. But if Parker could have known that in 1865 Wasson would be installed as minister of the Twenty-Eighth his heart would have rejoiced. This circumstance, however, owing to Wasson's miserable health, portended but a brief felicity for the society.

In his "Recollections and Impressions," Mr. Frothingham's tone concerning Parker is much warmer than in his "Boston Unitarianism," where his dramatic sympathy with the coterie he had undertaken to portray seemed to necessitate a certain coldness towards the man whom that coterie could not abide. "To be in his society," he says, "was to be impelled in the direction of all nobleness. He talked with me, lent me books, stimulated my thirst for knowledge, opened new visions of usefulness. It was a privilege to know such a man, so simple and so brave." He writes to Parker April 14, 1851, from Salem, Mass., where he was then settled: —

You know how I am placed; in the midst of Hunkerdom! No word of sympathy or comfort reaches me from a parishioner; no word of encouragement from a single person, I do not say of station and influence but of solid intelligence and weighty character. Even "the elect women," those true reliances of a young

healthier for such eating; but if he swallows Swedenborg whole, as the fashion is with his followers — why it lays (*sic*) hard in the stomach, and the man has a nightmare on him all his natural life, and talks about 'the Word,' and 'the Spirit,' 'correspondences,' 'receivers.' Yet the Swedenborgians have a calm and religious beauty in their lives which is much to be admired."

minister, withdraw from me their slim and sentimental support, with here and there a solitary exception. At home you know how it is. I do not like to speak of it. I hate to think of it. I even dislike to go into my father's house. I say this in no complaining spirit, but only as explaining the hearty comfort and refreshing joy that your words and example give me.

Then follows a very characteristic and elaborate bit of self-depreciation, and when Frothingham has cleansed his bosom of that perilous stuff he goes on: —

> Sometimes, I confess, my faith does waver, but not for any long time. Let me acknowledge most humbly that much of its steadiness and persistency are due to you. When I come to see you it is to the end that it may be increased and confirmed. . . . You do me good, and that is more than can be said of many a person who certainly never offends me by any moral exaggerations.

The friendliness of Parker's life had much variety. The centre of incandescence was in the bosom of his beloved Twenty-Eighth, and the radiation of the photosphere was bounded only by the circumference of the earth. Space set no limits to the personal relationship which he established with men and women who looked to him for aid and counsel from the four corners of the world. "Dear friend," began a letter from a Quaker out in Indiana, and went on to tell of the help received from Parker's books and then broke off sharply and began again: "Dear Theodore: We are just returned from the funeral of our child, and our

hearts turn first to thee for sympathy." This note continually recurs. It might be said of him, as it was said of St. Francis, "He remembered those whom God seemed to have forgotten." One of these was a poor woman who sent him a letter addressed, "Preacher of the Infidel Congregation." She had been told that "the infidels helped everybody" and that was her reason for coming to him. He found her desperately poor, explained to her, "Others call us Infidels, but we try to be Christians," and justified her piteous hope. He was past master in the art of doing little kindnesses. He would not send, he carried, the flowers from his pulpit to a paralytic woman from week to week, and helped her husband wheel her round to Exeter Place. Every day during one of the fugitive Slave troubles he saved a few moments for a sick girl of his congregation. His large charity did not stop short of Abby Folsom's wildest aberrations. "That flea of conventions," as Emerson has named her for all time, accounted herself one of Parker's sheep. "Satan himself," says Mrs. Cheney, "could hardly have devised a cunninger plan to try a good man's patience than this woman. She seated herself directly in front of Mr. Parker every Sunday and his sensitive nerves trembled lest she should speak." Her gratitude and respect at last kept her quiet, but Parker held the organ in reserve for an emergency.

People who imagined themselves infidels were much in the habit of summoning Parker when the

shadow of death fell on their homes. At one of these funerals he prayed, "O God, though he denied thy existence, yet he obeyed thy law." Another he describes: —

Tuesday I attended the funeral of a girl five or six years old, whose parents do not believe in the *continuous* and *conscious* life of the soul. It was terribly sad. The friends that I talked with were skeptical and conceited. I have seldom attended a sadder funeral. They wished no form of prayer, but for decency's sake wanted a minister. I suppose they sent for me as the *minimum* of a minister. I tried to give them the *maximum* of humanity. . . . I see not how any one can live without a continual sense of immortality. I am sure that I should be wretched without a *certainty* of it.

Another funeral, a few weeks later, was very different.

April 21 [1848], Friday. To-day I attended the funeral of Mr. Garrison's youngest child, Elizabeth Pease, sixteen months old. It was a beautiful service. We talked of Death, Immortality, of the Philosophy of Grief, its existence, cause, mission, etc. There was indeed sadness, but it was of that quiet and composed kind which blesses, and helps the wound close and heal again. I felt that it was *well with the child*, and well also *with the father and mother.*

Garrison had already found in Parker a preacher after his own heart, and Parker's sympathy with him in his day of trouble drew Garrison to him by a securer bond. Much that is said of Garrison's intolerance of difference gets an instructive com-

ment from the fact that Parker's political anti-slavery and his criticism of Garrison's disunion and non-voting principles did no injury to their alliance and made Parker no less welcome on the platform of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Suicide or death in any tragic form made sensible additions to the extent of Parker's ministry at large. He seldom failed in his endeavor to adapt himself to such occasions. Once, where the circumstance was particularly horrible, he transfigured it with a magic phrase. After describing the beautiful life of the good physician, who, after saving many, could not save himself, he said, "As he grew older the bodily frame was weaker, the brain tottered, and — he became immortal."

No one ever recognized the claims of relationship upon him more cordially than Theodore Parker. He was a human providence to many of his relatives; where spontaneous affection did not furnish the necessary impulse, duty coming to his aid. He adapted himself to each particular character and need with remarkable facility. With his brother Isaac he was more farmer than the man to whom he wrote. If he did not "glory in the goad," his "talk was of bullocks" and of everything that concerned the brother who had remained upon the Lexington farm. From Europe he wrote him dozens of pages at a time about the agricultural life that he had seen, never foolishly endeavoring to interest him in his theological or archæological researches. To many of his young relatives

and friends he wrote letters of such homely wisdom that Benjamin Franklin could have done no better if the task had fallen to him. His philosophy might be transcendental, but so practical was he in every-day affairs that men of business found in him their match on their own ground. Friends looked to him for advice about their investments. In one of his letters he reports that he had invested $150,000 for others during a term of years. To one relative he writes: —

Dear John, — The house will be a nice thing. It is well to own the house you live in, but not dwelling houses in general. . . . I hope you will buy a nice house, such as you like, with sun *in the kitchen*. A house on the south side of the street is worth much more than one on the north. You want the *sun* in the back part.

To another relative, about her husband's plans and purposes: —

I don't like to advise him with so little knowledge of the facts. But one thing I am sure of, — if he goes back to Lexington *he will do nothing, and ten years hence he will be driving some other man's milk cart at eighteen dollars a month, with no chance of any better fortune before him for life.* I trust he will not waste his time and money in a visit; and also that he will not *return to live here*. . . . He has made a bad experiment. He must be wiser next time. But to return to Lexington would be a yet worse experiment: he might as well go into partnership with "Bije Perry" at once as a general loafer.

This tribute of frankness he paid not only to blood relationship, but to whatever exigency his correspondence might present, requiring plainest speech. Here is a "charge" to a young minister, not of the usual installation kind; more like the gunner's solid shot, letting through daylight where it goes: —

I hope you are not going to break poor ——'s heart with sorrow, disappointment, and chagrin. She is your wife: you are bound to treat her more tenderly than yourself; to sacrifice your own personal predilections for her. You say she must have a husband whom she can *admire* and be *proud* of. It is for you to give her such a husband; to make such a husband for her out of yourself. It is not manly in you to be out of employment. . . . If there is any manhood in you, you will work. . . . Let the new responsibilities of marriage stir you to fresh efforts. I beg you not to put all the self-denial on ——, but to take that to yourself.

He could put on this sternness, but it was not his customary face. This is better seen in such a letter as that which he writes to a "dear little maiden" who has been crossed in love. Burnt spots in the woods, he tells her, bear the earliest plants and the most delicate flowers. "So can it be with you; so I trust it will be." To a young friend whose wife had perished in her early bloom, he wrote: —

I see the effect this is to have on your character. I know as you cannot how it will stimulate the noblest things in you, making you wise before your time, and

giving qualities else not won in many a year. Doubt not that you are remembered in the tenderest communings of my heart, both in its public and its private hours.

For all the social isolation resulting from Parker's theological heresies and his anti-slavery zeal, he was rich in friends in and beyond his wide parochial bounds. In the Twenty-Eighth there were older and younger men of fine character and large intelligence, with whom his relations were not merely parochial but confidential and affectionate to an eminent degree. His friendship with Dr. Howe survived the shock of the Doctor's withdrawal from his parish. From Parker's letters to him, and from those to others in which he appears and where he always figures as "the Chevalier," generally abbreviated to "the Chev.," it would appear that no one was more frequently or more affectionately in his thoughts. Their common interest in the Vigilance Committee and the affairs of Kansas and John Brown brought them into frequent and very genuine association. The orthodoxy of Wendell Phillips was no bar to his friendship with Parker, while their being near neighbors made it easier for them to see much of each other. Parker admired in Phillips that high-bred air to which he could not himself attain. Intellectually he could hold his own in the most guarded ring, but something of rustic habit clung to him through life, and his consciousness of this involved a certain shyness and timidity in such aristocratic com-

panies as flourished in the chilly atmosphere of Beacon Hill. That was a strangely inverted metaphor used by Mr. Thomas Appleton to Mrs. Apthorp when, meeting her on the street, he said to her, in view of her persistent attendance upon Parker's ministry, "We will make Boston too hot for you." Even Sumner and Phillips, to the Beacon Street manner born, were frozen out of the society of which they were the brightest ornaments. Parker's heresy did not begin to be so distasteful to the more highly cultured as his anti-slavery speech and action. Such as he had attracted of this class soon fell away from him after he began to practice what he had preached, until few belonging to it, besides the Hunts and Apthorps, were left. Parker's appreciation of their fidelity and courage grappled them to his soul with hooks of steel.

Much as Parker enjoyed having his friends near him, some of his warmest friendships flourished without the help of physical propinquity. One of the rarest of these was that with Samuel J. May. We have found Parker counting him among the advocates of the new theology, but he was hardly one of these. In the anti-slavery business he was with Parker heart and soul; in his theology he was much more conservative. He was more liberal than Parker, but less radical. Their correspondence began (as preserved) in 1843, and from that time until the last letter (preserved), in 1858, the letters count by dozens and by scores on either

side. Parker's to his "dear Sam Joe" are full of merriment, for all the serious purpose with which he often wrote. Anti-slavery matters make up the bulk of them. Parker is never more persuasive than when urging his theological opinions on this genial friend. It is in a letter of November 13, 1846, that I find Parker's formula of democracy stated for the first time. Later it approximated more nearly to the classic shape given to it by Lincoln in his Gettysburg speech: —

> Let the world have peace for five hundred years, the aristocracy of blood will have gone, the aristocracy of gold will have come and gone, that of talent will also have come and gone, and the aristocracy of goodness which is the democracy of man, the government *of* all, *for* all, *by* all, will be the power that is.

The last letter of the series is one in which sad experience has attained to something of prophetic strain. Its date is February 11, 1858.

> Oh! my dear S. J., open thine eyes, look through thy spectacles, and thou shalt once more behold the elegant chirography of thy long silent friend. A year ago yesterday I was in the good town of Syracuse; but Archimedes was not there to welcome me. I had passed the night in the inundation at Albany. The pleurisy was in my side, the fever in my blood, and I have been about good for nothing ever since. I have less than half my old joyous power of work, hence I have not written to you these *three months!* I grind out one sermon a week. That is about all I can do. . . . I am forty-seven by the reckoning of my mother; seventy-four in my own (internal) account. I am an

*old man.* Sometimes I think of knocking at Earth's door with my staff, saying, "Liebe mutter, let me in!" I don't know what is to come of it.

Another of his closest friendships was with Professor Edward Desor, who came to this country from Switzerland and remained here five years. He was a naturalist of profound ability. Parker, always hungering for knowledge, and reading men with more avidity than books, prized Desor highly for his scientific acquirements, but more highly for his personal qualities, the nobility of his temper and the kindness of his heart. Parker wrote on Desor's return to Europe: —

> Nothing has ever occurred, in nearly five years of acquaintance and four of intimate friendship, to cause the least regret. He has always been on the humane side, always on the just side. His love of truth, and sober industry, his intuitive perception of the relations of things, his quick sight for comprehensive generalizations, have made me respect him a great deal. His character has made me love him very much. There is no man I should miss so much of all my acquaintance. I count it a privilege to have known him and it will be a joy to remember him.

When Parker went to Europe in 1859, it was Desor's privilege to entertain him as hospitably as he had himself been entertained by Parker in Boston. Probably no circumstance of Parker's later life did so much as his friendship with Desor to engage his interest in scientific studies. In 1857 or '58 he preached a course of scientific sermons

which Miss Stevenson always spoke of as "the Darwin sermons," though Darwin's epoch-making book had not yet appeared when they were preached. But, like Emerson, Parker took kindly to the idea of organic evolution as formulated by Lamarck and others.

From first to last the balance of Parker's friendships tipped to the side of womanhood. It was not his choice, and he regretted the preponderance, not that he had more of women's friendship than he wanted, but because he had less of men's, and especially of men's who were his equals or superiors in various ways. It was the "ever-womanly" that attracted him in women, everything masculine in them repelling both his affection and his taste. So, on the other hand, it was the manliness of his own nature that attracted women. There was nothing sentimental in his regard for them, though of blunt affection much, and a daring use of endearing names and epithets, half playful, wholly simple and sincere. The legend of good women whom he accounted friends was a long one and included many well-known names: Lydia Maria Child, Julia Ward Howe, Ednah Dean Cheney, Caroline Healey Dall, Elizabeth Peabody, Rebecca and Matilda Goddard, the Russells and the Shaws, Caroline C. Thayer, Hannah E. Stevenson, Sarah Hunt and her sister Eliza — Mrs. Robert E. Apthorp. Parker's intimacy with Miss Hunt was rarely beautiful. She was a woman of remarkable character and mind and conversational power. She was,

perhaps, even more helpful to Parker than he was to her. She was in a very special manner the friend of his family, her frequent, almost daily, visits being prized by Mrs. Parker as highly as by the man of the house. Given a man of great abilities and public notoriety, whose wife is not his intellectual mate, and there will pretty certainly be women who will show their appreciation of him by a studied or involuntary neglect of her. If some women made this mistake in their relations with Parker, there were others who did not, and thereby endeared themselves to him the more. In 1856 the Hunts and Apthorps went abroad, taking with them a great piece out of Parker's happiness. Their house had been for him a garden of refreshment in which he was always sure of finding cordial welcome, rest for his jaded nerves, stimulus for a sluggish brain. For a long time it was his habit to go there every Sunday afternoon to engage in the translation of Heine, some of his own examples proving better than we should expect from him, working in such delicate material. When they had gone to Europe, hardly a week went by without a letter to Mrs. Apthorp and another to Miss Hunt. They were letters that did homage to his friends.[1] They told the news of the parish and the town, especially what Mrs. Howe and the Chevalier were doing; they were as frolicsome as the antics of a happy child; they reflected the political excitements of Buchanan's administration;

[1] For examples see Weiss, vol. i., pp. 304–311.

they responded to the letters of his friends with learned comments on their studies and their observations; they plunged deep in theological discussions; they laid bare the aspirations and the disappointments of his private heart; they overflowed with gratitude for his possession of such dear and precious friends. One of them celebrates the glory of Emerson in comparison with the other literary fellows of the time. Each has his due appreciation, but the fame and influence of Emerson would outlast them all. I have thought that if I could print every one of these letters they would do more than all that I have written to reveal Parker's character and mind in their just aspect and proportion.

One cannot speak of the Hunts and Apthorps without thinking of Frances Power Cobbe, whom Mrs. Apthorp has known so well and loved so much. Her friendship with Parker was so complete as created by their correspondence that any meeting less sacred than that in Florence, when Parker was dying, would have seemed a diminution of its perfectness.

There is a nearer view of Parker than any we have yet come upon. It is afforded by the self-communings and the prayers that are written in his journal. It was quite as much commonplace book as journal. He did not merit the contempt of his neighbor, Wendell Phillips, for men who keep a diary, his entries were so infrequent and irregular. Weeks and months passed sometimes without a personal word. Once, at least, we find

his resolving to be more regular, but do not find that the resolve made much difference in the habit. The first volume is a merchant's ledger or book of some kind, very bulky; the others, some half dozen, not so large, but none of them small or thin. If Parker himself "never missed a line" in these volumes, others have dealt more gently with them; many passages being erased; an inky square sometimes obliterating a page. But much of the erasure was pretty certainly his own; the afterthought expunging some impatient utterance or intemperate word. It would be a mistake to consider that this nearer view of Parker is upon the whole the most satisfactory one obtainable. We may get too close to a man, as to a mountain, for a comprehensive view. Much that Parker wrote in his journal was the casual expression of his weekend or general physical exhaustion. When he was unusually tired or sick the world looked dark to him, his work unfruitful or ill-done. He worked off in his journal the gathering stuff oppressing him, where other ministers would have inflicted it upon their congregations or their friends. His journal was his escape-pipe — upon which he parked his irritation, melancholy, doubts, and fears, and threw it out of his consciousness.

But it was much more than this. Some of its pages breathe the noblest aspirations of his soul, the most tender recollections and affections of his heart. He was, as we have seen, a man of days and hours, and the ending year, his birthday and

versary, the anniversary of his first leaving home, were days that he marked with some white stone of remembrance, or with some earnest hope of a more useful life. The anniversary of his South Boston sermon was another that he seldom let go by without some sign and seal. The pity was that it must needs remind him of his local isolation. More than a dozen times it came and went without one intermediate sign of friendly invitation for him to take part in such a service as that of Mr. Shackford's ordination. It was when brooding on this aspect of his life that he wrote in his journal: —

I have but one resource, and that is to overcome evil with good — much evil with more good; old evil with new good. Sometimes when I receive a fresh insult it makes my blood rise for a moment; then I seek, if possible, to do some good, secretly, to the person. It takes away the grief of a wound amazingly.

Early in his Boston ministry he wrote: —

My chosen walk will be with the humble. I will be the minister of the humble, and, with what culture and love I have, I will toil for them. I rejoice to see that most of my hearers are from the humbler class of men. If it had been *only* the cultivated and the rich, I should feel that I was wrong somewhere; but when the voice *comes up from the ground*, I can't refuse to listen to it.

Returning to his pulpit after a brief vacation, he writes: —

How delightful it is to begin preaching again! It was so pleasant to see the old familiar faces, and to read

again to those persons the hymns and psalms I have read to them so often, and to pray with them also and feel that many a soul prayed with me.

Nowhere is the essential man revealed more perfectly than in the journal of August 23, 1852, the day preceding his forty-second birthday anniversary.

Two and forty years ago, my father, a hale man in his one-and-fiftieth year, was looking for the birth of another child before morning, — the eleventh child. How strange it is, this life of ours, and this death — the second birth. How little does the mother know of the babe she bears under her bosom — aye, of the babe she nurses at her breast! Poor dear father, poor dear mother! You little knew how many a man would curse the son you painfully brought into life, and painfully and religiously brought up. Well, I will bless you — true father and most holy mother were you to me: the earliest thing you taught me was *duty* — duty to God, duty to man; that life is not a pleasure, not a pain, but a *duty*. Your words taught me this and your industrious lives. What would I give to have added more of gladness to your life on earth — earnest, toilsome, not without sorrows!

As you look down from heaven, if, indeed, you can see your youngest born, there will be much to chide. I hope there is something to approve. Dear merciful Father, Father God, I would serve Thee and bless mankind!

As here, in many other places the tender recollection bursts into a flower of prayer. Often we feel that we have been admitted to a privacy too sacred

for a stranger's feet. But the more we read, the more we honor and admire and love the man. The revelation is that of a man morbidly sensitive to the touch of other men's unkindness or ill will, more sensitive to any touch of sympathy; quick to resent a hurt, but quicker to forgive; conscious of a great work to be done, not easily satisfied with the use that he has made of his great powers and opportunities; hampered by a body that might have served an idler well enough, but which often broke under the strain he put upon it; wholesome and sweet in his affections; enamored with the beauty of the world; serving his conscience with indomitable courage and resolve; with a great enthusiasm for humanity and a consciousness of God that gave him absolute assurance of the good of life and the soul's immortality.

## CHAPTER XII

### KANSAS AND JOHN BROWN

After the Burns rendition there was no further attempt to compel Boston to surrender a fugitive slave. The Washington administration gauged the temper of the city by the Burns affair and perceived that it had gone quite far enough upon that line. There was, however, little danger that Parker would find his anti-slavery occupation gone. Some months before the Burns affair had run its course and reached its hateful end, all the fine hopes which some had cherished, of Saturnian days returning after the Compromises of 1850, had been rudely dashed by the reopening of the whole controversy more fundamentally than ever by the introduction and passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, the offspring of Stephen A. Douglas's immoral temper and ingenious mind. The bill repealing the Missouri Compromise and opening to slavery the territories rescued from it even by that base concession was passed in the Senate March 4, 1854, and a second time, after some insignificant changes in the House, the following May (25th). The North, drugged by the cup which Clay had mixed so skillfully and Webster had commended to

its lips, was for the most part dull to the significance of the new menace to freedom, as if bent on justifying President Pierce's congratulations in his first message, December 5, 1853, on "the repose and security in the public mind." Within ten days came the first intimations of new trouble, and the Kansas-Nebraska bill was introduced January 4, 1854. No one was quicker than Parker to see the meaning of a bill for which Jefferson Davis was as hot as Stephen A. Douglas. February 12, 1854, the title of his sermon was "Some Thoughts on the New Assault upon Freedom in America and the General State of the Country in Relation thereunto." It was a sermon of 20,000 words, and its depth was well proportioned to its length. It had the large historical framework in which he was ever prone to set the immediate lesson for the day. Coming to closer quarters with this lesson, he named two victories of freedom over slavery in seventy-eight years, the ordinance of 1787 and the abolition of the slave trade in 1808, and nine victories of slavery over freedom. The ninth was the Compromise of 1850; the Nebraska bill, if carried, would be the tenth. He predicted that the eleventh would be — just exactly what it proved to be in the Dred Scott decision, three years later, in the first month of Buchanan's administration. The sermon was an armory of facts of which his friends at Washington availed themselves for their congressional speeches, but it had its passages of fervid eloquence, as where he said nearing the conclusion: —

Well, let us contend bravely against this wicked device of men who are the enemies alike of America and mankind. I call on all men who love man and love God, to oppose this extension of slavery. Talk against it, preach against it — by all means act against it. Call meetings of the towns to oppose it, of the Congressional districts, of the State, yea, of all the free States. Make a fire in the rear of your timid servants in Congress. Let us fight manfully, contesting the ground inch by inch, till at last we are driven back to the Rock of Plymouth. There let us gather up the wreck of the old ship which brought over the three churches of Plymouth, Salem, Boston, — whose children have so often proved false, — therewith let us build anew our Mayflower, make Plymouth our Delft-haven, launch again upon the sea, sailing to Greenland or to Africa, by prayer to lay other deep foundations, and in the wilderness to build up the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Even those who do not agree with Emerson, that Shakespeare sometimes "premeditated bombast," may think that we have here the defect of that particular quality. But Parker was so downright earnest and sincere that his most turgid rhetoric was transfigured by his moral passion into something very different from what it might have been, proceeding from a man less perfectly convinced and less profoundly stirred.

The Bill had not yet reached its final passage when, May 12, 1854, he gave an address in New York before the Anti-Slavery Society of that city. Its subject was the Nebraska bill, and there could be no better witness to the fullness of his mind as

applied to the slavery question than a comparison of this speech with that given in Boston to an anti-slavery convention a few days later (May 31st).[1] The two speeches have intersecting lines, but are remarkably unlike. The statistics in the second speech are massed so heavily that those in the first, compared with them, are but an awkward squad.

In this speech occurs a variant of Lincoln's famous "government of the people, by the people, for the people." It is interesting that, as in a speech of 1850, it is imbedded in a passage which might have been the inspiration of Seward's "irrepressible conflict" and Lincoln's "house divided against itself," a view to which Parker continually recurred, estimating the chances of victory when the crash should come. I do not find Parker's formula, anywhere, exactly corresponding with Lincoln's. In "Thoughts on America" and "The Slave Power in America" it is, "Government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people." It was Miss Stevenson's opinion that its final form with Parker was exactly Lincoln's — and so repeated frequently in sermon, speech, and prayer. Lincoln's law partner, Herndon, who knew Parker well and had much correspondence with him, came on to Boston after the Douglas-Lincoln debate and saw Parker and other anti-slavery men, with an eye to Lincoln's political prospects. Going back to Springfield, he took

[1] "Some Thoughts on the Progress of America and the Influence of her Diverse Institutions."

some of Parker's new sermons and addresses. "One of these," he says, "was a lecture on 'The Effect of Slavery on the American People,' which was delivered in the Music Hall, Boston, and which I gave to Lincoln, who read it and returned it. He liked especially the following expression, which he marked with a pencil, and which he in substance afterwards used in his Gettysburg address: 'Democracy is direct self-government, over all the people, by all the people, for all the people.'" The address referred to was delivered July 4, 1858, and was Parker's last great anti-slavery address. The words, exactly as quoted by Herndon, will be found on page 138 of volume viii. of Miss Cobbe's edition of Parker's works. The volume bears the title "Miscellaneous Discourses."

A sermon of June 4, 1854, two days after the return of Burns to slavery, was called "The New Crime against Humanity." It was at once a review of the Burns case and of the Nebraska legislation which had reached its climax a few days before, with a preliminary indictment of Commissioner Loring as the murderer of the man killed at the attempted rescue which so miserably miscarried. One must read this sermon in its entirety and also that of July 4, 1854, "Dangers which threaten the Rights of Man in America," to appreciate fully the strength and fervor of Parker's anti-slavery preaching at this stage of the great controversy. In the latter sermon he fully elaborates his three possibilities: The Union may be

dissolved; Slavery may destroy Freedom; Freedom may destroy Slavery. The first he set aside, though he did not expect the territory of the United States, as it was in his time, to always remain one nation.[1] Of the second possibility the omens were thicker than the leaves of Vallombrosa. "Ten years more like the ten past, and it will be all over with the liberties of America." He counted the acts of a new political tragedy: the acquisition of St. Domingo and Hayti, next of Cuba, the rights of slavery conceded in the Free States (Dred Scott decision); restoration of slave-trade; a new quarrel with Mexico to get more of her territory for slavery. Nevertheless, he expected his third possibility to become actual. Remembering the fifty thousand faces he had looked into on his last round of lectures, he plucked up his drowning courage by the locks: —

> When the North stands up manfully, united, we can tear down Slavery in a twelvemonth; and when we do unite, it must not be only to destroy Slavery in the territories but to uproot every weed of Slavery throughout this whole wide land. Then leanness will depart from our souls; then the blessing of God will come upon us; we shall have a Commonwealth based on righteousness which is the strength of any people, and shall stand longer than Egypt, — national fidelity to God our age-outlasting pyramid!

The practical outcome of Douglas's "squatter sovereignty" was what every one should have an-

[1] *Works*, vol. vi., p. 138. See Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, second ed., vol. ii., p. 521.

ticipated — a desperate struggle for the soil of Kansas by the slaveholders on the one hand and the free-state men on the other. The tragic story has been often told, and I need not repeat it here. Parker's anti-slavery friends were all deeply engaged in the endeavor to secure preponderance for freedom, and he was not behind the foremost of them in his practical efficiency. He was deeply interested in the New England Emigrant Aid Society and closely affiliated with the Massachusetts Kansas Committee. His voice and purse and pen were at the service of every enterprise that promised well for the good cause. The state committee of which he was an active member raised nearly $100,000 in 1856 in money and supplies. The supplies included $20,000 worth of arms and ammunition, the arms those which some of the humorous called "Beecher's Bibles," and Parker "Sharp's Rights of the People." We find him going to the trains to see the emigrants starting for Kansas. Higginson followed them and Parker ached to follow him, writing the Apthorps, "But for your visit to Europe I should have spent my vacation in Kansas. Next summer will probably find me there." The whole course of the struggle could be recovered from his sermons and letters if all the other records of it should be lost. The lines on which he was coöperating with Stearns and Howe and Sanborn are indicated in a letter from Stearns to a New York Committee, May 17, 1857: A grant (unrealized) of $100,000 from the

Massachusetts legislature; the organization of a secret force, strictly defensive, well armed, under the control of "the famous John Brown," more famous now than then; donations of money to those parties of settlers in Kansas whose vicissitudes had disabled them. Meantime the preaching and speech-making went on, answering to each latest exigency of the political situation, as "bleeding Kansas" drew her wounded length along the intolerable years. Very characteristic was such a sermon as that of November 26, 1854, on "The Consequences of an Immoral Principle and False Idea of Life." The immoral principle was that there is no "higher law" than the statute, however wicked, which politicians make. The false idea of life was that the amassing and protection of property is the main concern of individuals and states. Here, as in many other sermons and addresses, he amplifies the degrading influence of slavery upon business, education, the press, and the pulpit.

A tremendous day's work was that of May 7, 1856, just on the eve of such momentous things as Sumner's Kansas speech, followed by Brooks's assault, the looting of Lawrence, Kan., by the border ruffians, and John Brown's terrible reprisals on the Pottawatomie. On that day Parker made two speeches before the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York. That in the morning, "The Present Aspect of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, and of the Various Forces which work

therein," was a capital illustration of Parker's relation to the Garrisonians, on whose platform he was speaking. This was a relation of the utmost frankness and sincerity. He praised their persistency, their unselfishness, their devotion to absolute right. He called them "the anti-slavery party proper." But they forgot, he said, that there must be political workmen, and they did not do justice to those who in their responsible public stations had not the freedom of thought and action enjoyed by Garrison and Phillips. In this speech, as in many others, Parker contended that one of the essential things was to "arouse a sense of indignation" in the slave; to "urge him, of himself, to put a stop to bearing the wickedness." He did not fear the charge that he was instigating colored insurrection. Could he have done so, he would have initiated it in every Southern State, heartily believing that

> Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.

The speech of the evening was a great statistical speech of fifteen thousand words on "The Present Crisis in American Affairs." It contemplated as possible the election of an anti-slavery president the following November, with no consequent secession of the South. Parker's prophetic soul was never equal to a full appreciation of the reality of Southern threats of secession. He expected temporary disunion rather as the result of Northern resistance to Southern aggression than as the result of Southern resistance to the Northern restriction

of slavery. He was only confident that there would be a great collision and that the party of freedom would be victorious.

Parker's correspondence with the political anti-slavery leaders and statesmen of his time is an impressive testimony to his political importance. This correspondence as exhibited by Weiss was formidable in its amount, but it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that in the manuscript collections there are dozens and scores of letters to Seward and Chase and Hale and Sumner for every one preserved by Weiss, with many more to Bancroft, Horace Mann, and Charles Francis Adams and others than are given in the Weiss biography. And, what is quite as important, we have in the manuscript collections the answers made to Parker's letters, and these are highly significant of the value which his correspondents set upon his opinions. Without these answers we might have imagined that Parker was super-serviceable, and that the criticisms and demands he made were frequently resented. There was in fact, sometimes, the frankest disavowal of the imputed fault, Bancroft writing once, "You are wrong in almost every point," and Wilson standing up manfully for his tribute to a slaveholding senator, William Wirt, as the best man he had met in Washington. Seward was anxious to impress on Parker the difficulties attending the embodiment of political ideals in practical legislation. He turned to Parker his best side, the side he turned to Mrs. Seward, his invalid

wife, the courage of whose convictions was a needful antidote to the baleful influence of Thurlow Weed. Sumner's correspondence with her, which he highly valued, was one of perfect mutual sympathy on anti-slavery lines. The fears of Seward's radicalism, which cost him the nomination in 1860, would have been more agitating had it been known that in 1858 he wrote to Parker: —

> You have discovered clearly that the negative anti-slavery policy of the time is soon to cease, because it has practically effected all that it can, and that a positive action directed towards the removal of slavery from the country is to be effected.

More than once Seward expresses his thanks for material in Parker's speeches, sermons and addresses of which he proposes to make use in his own speeches.

Parker's admiration for Chase was very great, and his approval of his course was general if not uniform. Next to Seward he was his candidate for the presidency in 1860. But he was always quick to resent the characteristic Republican idea of the sacredness of slavery in the States. To Banks, from whom he never expected much, he wrote: —

> I think that Mr. Chase has made a fatal error in declaring that Slavery in the States is sacred; it is hostile to the fundamental idea of the movement. Sumner has also erred in his watchword, *Freedom national and Slavery sectional.* I recognize the finality of no *sectional* Slavery even.

Parker's estimate of Horace Mann was that he was one of the three greatest helpers of the time; Emerson and Garrison the others. He corresponded much with Mann on educational matters, in which his interest was profound. Once we find him trying to make peace between Mann and Phillips, who had criticised Mann with his customary severity. Mann wrote to Parker, "What a good man you are. I am sure nobody would be damned if you were at the head of the Universe." "But," he continued, "I will never treat a man with respect whom I do not respect, be the consequences what they may, so help me — Horace Mann!"

To Wilson, as to Sumner, on his arrival at senatorial dignity, Parker wrote a letter of generous and lofty expectation, not without some drastic comments upon his political career. For example: "You have been seeking for office with all your might." One of the criticisms was on Wilson's active participation in the Native American movement, with which Parker had no sympathy. Wilson confesses to a daring and successful political manœuvre for the capturing of the Native Americans for Republican uses. He thanked Parker for his frankness, and said that he had kept the letter, "for warning and rebuke, and for instruction in righteousness:" the words to that effect.

The letters to and from John P. Hale are very numerous, the more so because Hale was one of Parker's counsel in the "trial for misdemeanor." A slightly garbled one of Parker's was printed in

facsimile in the Weiss volumes. The omission is from a description of Stephen A. Douglas, whom he had just seen and heard in Illinois. The omitted words are here given in italics: "He *was considerably drunk and* made one of the most sophistical and deceitful speeches I ever listened to." The date of this letter was only a fortnight in advance of Frémont's defeat and Buchanan's election. It said: —

> If Buchanan is President I think the Union does not hold out his four years. It must end in civil war, which I have been preparing for these six months past. I buy no books, except for pressing need. Last year I bought $1500 worth. This year I shall not order $200 worth. I may want the money for cannons.

The correspondence with Sumner is fuller than that with any of the other anti-slavery leaders. It began with Parker's letter of enthusiastic approval of Sumner's "True Grandeur of Nations" in 1845. It ended a few months before Parker's death. Of the letter which Parker wrote Sumner at the time of his election to the Senate, Colonel Higginson has written, "I think Plutarch's 'Lives' can show nothing more simple and noble than this counsel." It is an impiety to abridge it, but I can give only a few sentences: —

> You told me once that you were in Morals, not in Politics. Now I hope you will show that you are still in Morals *although* in Politics. I hope you will be *the Senator with a conscience.* . . . I consider that Massachusetts has put you where you have no right to consult

for the ease or the reputation of yourself; but for the eternal Right. All of our statesmen build on the opinion of to-day a house that is admired to-morrow, and the next day to be torn down with hooting. I hope you will build on the Rock of Ages and look to Eternity for your justification. . . . You see I try you by a difficult standard and that I am not easily pleased. I hope some years hence to say, you have done better than I *advised!*

That Parker could take this lofty tone with a man so proud-spirited and sensitive as Sumner and be not ungraciously received is significant of the weighty estimation in which he was held, as was the sum of his relations with the political anti-slavery leaders. When, after many months in the Senate, Sumner remained silent, Parker became alarmed and considered him "in imminent deadly peril," so writing Dr. Howe. But when in August, 1852, Sumner found his voice, and made his first great anti-slavery speech in the Senate, Parker did not stint the measure of his approbation. A common love of books and theological sympathies strengthened the anti-slavery bond. When, in May, 1856, Sumner made the speech which provoked Brooks's murderous assault, Parker wrote him the next day (21st), "God bless you for the brave words you spoke and have always spoken." But when this letter reached Washington the assault of the 22d had taken place and Sumner's life hung in the balance. Parker wrote to Hale begging to know the worst, and wishing he

might have taken the blows on his own head, "at least *half of them*." The indignation meeting at Faneuil Hall, on May 24th, did not satisfy Parker's sense of what the time required. Even though on indignation bent the politicians had a frugal mind. They would not permit Phillips to be heard. The next morning Parker's sermon at the Music Hall made up what was lacking. Had the news arrived of the latest doings in Kansas he might have dipped his pen in blacker ink. As it was, it had no rosy hue.[1]

The name of Abraham Lincoln does not appear upon the list of Parker's political correspondents. This would be stranger if Parker had not had in Herndon a mediator through whom he could express his approval of Lincoln's course from time to time; at other times his doubts. Apparently they never met, though Parker lectured in Springfield, October 24, 1856; but Lincoln was then in the thick of the Frémont campaign, in which he made fifty speeches, and on that night he may have been a hundred miles away. It was just about this time that he had his first memorable tussle with Douglas, giving him a foretaste of the quality of the antagonist he would meet in the long debate of 1858. Lincoln was well acquainted with Parker's political and theological writings, and took great delight in them. In the latter he found an elaborate expression of his own theological

[1] He kept a scrap-book, into which he pasted everything relating to the assault on Sumner.

opinions and a foreshadowing of that Church of Love to God and Man, having no longer creed, which he declared that he should like to join. Parker took the liveliest interest in the Lincoln-Douglas debate of 1858 and wrote Herndon frequently about it. August 28th: "I look with great interest on the contest in your state and read the speeches, the *noble speeches*, of Mr. Lincoln with enthusiasm." In the same letter he characterizes Douglas as "a mad dog barking at the wolf that has torn our sheep, but *more dangerous than the wolf*." "*I* never recommended the Republicans," he says, "to take Douglas into their family." For Greeley's schemes, looking to this adoption, he had no respect, and Weiss's omissions in Parker's political letters of this period are generally significant of criticisms upon Greeley's incapacity for leadership. He is characterized as "capricious, crotchety, full of whims," honest and humane, "but pitiably weak." The letter ends, "I think the Republican party will nominate Seward for the Presidency and elect him in 1860. Then the wedge is entered and will be driven home." When it is remembered that Seward was set aside as being more radical than Lincoln, it cannot be doubted that Parker would have been much disappointed by Lincoln's nomination. It is easy to be wiser now, with Seward's record for the winter of 1860–61 in full view. Writing September 9, 1858, Parker has no doubt that Douglas will be beaten. But in the Ottawa meeting of

that year he thought Douglas had the best of it; that Lincoln evaded his questions, which went to the heart of the matter. "That is not the way to fight the battle of Freedom." Such is the irony of history that it was things like this which he deplored that secured Lincoln's nomination, and through that the integrity of the Union and the emancipation of the slave.

The transition from Lincoln to John Brown is not illogical: they pursued the same ends in life, and in the manner of their death they were not much divided. Parker was well acquainted with Brown's doings in Kansas in a general way, and had great confidence in him. He did not know how intimately he was concerned in the "Pottawatomie Executions." Had he, the knowledge would not have staggered him. Brown had heard him preach in 1853, or earlier, and admired his piety and morality, while severely disapproving his theology. Their first meeting, probably, was in January, 1857, at the Music Hall. Three months later, when Brown was hiding in Boston from his pursuers, Parker wrote to Judge Russell, who was secreting Brown: "If I were in his position I should shoot dead any man who attempted to arrest me for those alleged crimes; then I should be tried by a Massachusetts jury and be acquitted. P. S. — I don't advise J. B. to do this, but it is what I should do."

Parker was one of the first to hear and carefully attend to John Brown's Virginia plans, not

as changed suddenly and fatally at the last,[1] but as intending the introduction of a body of armed men into the Virginia mountains, with a view to gathering together slaves in large numbers — there to defend themselves or take the underground railroad for Canada. September 11, 1857, Brown wrote him that he was "in immediate want of five hundred or one thousand dollars for secret service, and no questions asked." A little later, on his arrival in Kansas, he disclosed his plans in a general way to some of those who shared his desperate venture at the last. A start was soon made, Brown economizing at Tabor, Iowa, two hundred rifles with other stores that had got so far towards Kansas, sent by the Massachusetts Kansas Committee. The idea was to spend the winter of 1857–58 in Ohio under the military instruction of one Hugh Forbes, a Garibaldian soldier and impecunious adventurer in whom Brown had incontinently put his trust. He proved a traitor, or, at least, threatened so violently to divulge Brown's plans unless his own pecuniary and other demands were met, that they were postponed for a year and more. It was by means of Forbes's letters that the John Brown secret committee of six members, Theodore Parker, Frank B. Sanborn, Dr. S. G. Howe, George L. Stearns, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Gerrit Smith, were first in-

[1] Apparently; though there are intimations that he privately entertained the Harper's Ferry incident for some time in advance, and dropped a word about it here and there.

formed of the nature of Brown's "secret service." It was from no doubt of its character, but as fearing that Forbes's betrayal would make its success impossible, that the business was postponed. The members of the committee were much divided among themselves. Before this critical juncture — February 22, 1858 — Sanborn had met John Brown at Gerrit Smith's in Peterboro', N. Y., and "in the long winter evening the whole outline of Brown's campaign in Virginia[1] was laid before our little council,[2] to the astonishment and almost the dismay of those present." Brown's arguments were convincing of the soundness of his plans, or, at least, that he must not be allowed to execute them without such aid as might assure their possible success. Sanborn went back to Boston with Smith's generous promises of financial aid and saw Parker and Higginson at once. At Parker's suggestion Brown was invited to Boston on a secret visit. He came and stayed four days. He succeeded in interesting Parker deeply in his plans, not in convincing him that they were likely to succeed, as Brown imagined. But Parker believed that even if they failed they must do good by precipitating the contest which must surely come, while every year's delay made likelier a fatal issue, or one purchased for freedom at a more fearful cost. At the end of April letters came from

[1] Less the attack on Harper's Ferry.

[2] Sanborn, Smith, and Edwin Morton, of Plymouth, Mass., a classmate of Sanborn at Harvard.

Forbes, threatening to divulge everything unless Brown were dismissed from the chief command and himself put in his place. Parker, Smith, Stearns, and Sanborn were reluctantly convinced that action must be postponed, but not Howe and Higginson, who thought Forbes could be outwitted. The majority prevailed, and Brown, sick at heart, was constrained to go back to Kansas, where he did good service, making a foray into Missouri and carrying off eleven slaves to Canada, with an infant born upon the way. It was understood that he would wait a year and then strike when and where he should think best, without needless warning to his friends. Their case was that of Governor Andrew, who declared, "Whatever might be thought of John Brown's acts, John Brown himself was *right*." The man was so convincing in his earnestness and consecration, and could so invest his daring project with an atmosphere of intellectual sobriety, that they had no doubt he would make good use of the arms and money put into his hands. And Parker was never one of those who thought that he did not.

But so it happened that, for several months before Parker's final leave of Boston, he saw nothing and heard little of the wonderful old man in whose hatred of slavery he had found, as almost nowhere else, a passion equal to his own. When Parker sailed for the West Indies in February, 1859, John Brown had just crossed the Kansas border on his way to Canada with his eleven slaves, but Parker

knew little of his doings thenceforth until all the world was taken into his secret in the fall of 1859.

The years corresponding to Parker's anti-slavery activity from the time of the Burns rendition onward to the end of his Boston ministry saw no abatement of his interest in theological matters nor in his average pulpit work and pastoral care. From the two or three hundred invitations[1] to lecture which he received every year he accepted, with a few exceptions, such as would permit his return to the Music Hall congregation every Sunday morning. The printed sermons of these years (1854–59) give the impression that his preaching was mainly controversial and political, but it was not actually so. A truer story is that told by the volume of fragmentary selections — "Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man." From these we gather that his preaching, for the most part, was moral and religious in a simple, homely way, with much of picture and parable, to which he had an inexhaustible proclivity. There was always the same abundant knowledge of all kinds, serving him for argument and illustration; much looseness of arrangement and redundancy of matter; many lapses of taste, with here and there a lapse of memory, or too eager snatching at such

[1] One of these, and one only, was from a slave State, Delaware, where his lecture at Wilmington was a comparison of free labor and slave labor as illustrated by the two smallest States in the Union, Delaware and Rhode Island. There were threats of rough usage, but Parker's courage and his epigrams; with the good manners of cultivated hearers carried him safely through.

rumors as were favorable to his preconceived opinions. Those who sometimes wearied of the theological reiteration and the political denunciation took comfort from such sermons as that upon Old Age and that of July 15, 1855, "Beauty in the World of Matter considered as a Revelation of God." He was midway of "a series of discourses, treating in an abstract and metaphysical way certain great matters," when, the weather becoming very hot, he determined to substitute for one of the series the sermon named. It was as if the abundance of the summer had produced a new variety of sumptuous flower. One must go farther than Whitman, even to Richard Jefferies' "Pageant of Summer," for such a burst of joy in natural things, such midsummer madness of delight in the fair things of the earth. Much was remembered from his Lexington boyhood; much more is evidence how close this man of many books and cares still held his ear to Nature's beating heart.

As if his regular preaching and lecturing and anti-slavery work were not enough, in 1856 he assumed the charge of an independent society in Watertown, generally preaching there in the afternoon the sermon he had preached in the morning, for such service holding that the laborer was worthy of his horse-hire and no more. This arrangement continued for a year. Another opportunity much prized was that offered him by the Progressive Friends of Longwood, Chester County, Pa., a group of people remarkable for their reformatory

sympathies and their intellectual freedom. Parker went to them, as to an Earthly Paradise, in 1855, and again in 1858, preaching twice on the first visit and four times on the second. His first sermon in 1855, "Relation between Ecclesiastical Institutions and Religious Consciousness" (I find the title in this form on a copy which he prepared for publication), was preached May 19, the fourteenth anniversary of his South Boston sermon, to which he referred, saying that since then he had received no invitation to take part in any ordination or dedication service till now, when the Progressive Friends had invited him to the dedication of their meeting-house. The sermon was a powerful one as an indictment of the popular theology, but infinitely less precious than that of the next day, "Of the Delights of Piety," one of the most glowing psalms that Parker ever wrote. One of the sermons that he preached on his second visit, "The Soul's Normal Delight in the Infinite God," is another rendering of the same lofty theme. It is a lovely series of pictures, but has not the rushing spontaneity of the earlier discourse, though it contains some of the most tender reminiscences of his early life. It is, however, one of the sermons that must be consulted by any one wishing to become acquainted with the higher ranges of Parker's pulpit thought. In May, 1858, Parker's work was so nearly done that these sermons ought to represent the climax of his powers, but the first, "The Progressive Development of the Conception of God in

the Books of the Bible," suggests that his mind was already suffering from the depletion of his physical strength. It is below the level of his knowledge of Old Testament studies, while at the same time it indicates what a transposition of values there has been since Parker's time. In another of the sermons he indicts the ecclesiastical conception of God for high crimes and misdemeanors, and another, the third in their order of delivery, expounds "The Philosophical Idea of God and its Relation to the Scientific and Religious Wants of Man now." This is one of the loftiest expressions of the faith that was in him. By "philosophical" in his title he means "rational;" so generally. We have in this sermon one of those *obiter dicta* in which Parker qualified the severity of his formal expositions with a wisdom milder than their own. He does not think metaphysicians

> have much intuitive power to perceive religious truths directly, by the primal human instinct, nor do I think that they in the wisest way observe the innermost activities of the human soul. Poets like Shakespeare observe the play of human passion better than metaphysicians like Berkeley and Hume, better than moralists like Butler and Paley. Commonly, I think, men and women of simple religious feeling furnish the facts which men of great thoughtful genius work up into philosophic theology.

There was good self-criticism here. All of Parker's metaphysics was an attempt to justify the simple religious feeling of his inborn humanity.

The financial crash of 1857 and the subsequent depression gave the revivalists of the country such an opportunity as they had not had for many years to play upon the religious sensibilities of the community. There was great religious excitement in Boston as elsewhere, on which Parker made such comment as the manner and incidents of the revival seemed to require — the first, in a sermon of February 14, 1858, "False and True Theology," which anticipated the two Longwood sermons on the ecclesiastical and philosophical ideas of God and their appropriate effects. Another stick of fuel on the fire of evangelical indignation flaming out at Parker in the Boston churches was hardly needed to make it seven times hot, but, if it was, this sermon would seem to have furnished it. Clear and strong it rang out the preacher's confidence in "the adequacy of man for all his functions," the religious equally with the physical, intellectual, affectional, and moral. It was not these glowing affirmations that excited the wrath of the traditionalists, but the preacher's stern and awful strictures on their thoughts and ways. He was made an object of concentric prayer. Men prayed that his people might leave him and come to them; that confusion and distraction might enter his study and prevent him from writing the sermon, "which was already finished," says Parker; that God would put "a hook in this man's jaws so that he would not be able to speak;" that God would "remove him out of the way and let his influence die with him."

After his death it was boasted that this prayer had been answered unmistakably by the fortunate event. It is not to be believed that such things expressed the average temper of the orthodox churches, and Parker's passing allusion to them was perhaps more than they deserved. Both timely and appropriate, however, were two sermons of April 4th and 11th, "A False and True Revival of Religion" and "The Revival of Religion which we Need," the former stern in its constructions, and the latter warm with many a breath of sweet humanity. Even so ample an admirer of Parker as Colonel Higginson has suggested that Parker's representations of the revival theology were too severe. I could more readily agree with him, if, during the revival, I had not heard sermons preached which argued the indestructibility of the sinner's body in a furnace of eternal fire. Parker was a Democrat in his theology. He did not care so much what orthodox scholars were writing in "the quiet and still air of delightful studies" as what their creeds avowed and what the common people heard and possibly believed.

The revival did not distract him from the most obvious of those duties which a true revival would, he thought, enforce upon the public mind — that to the nation in its perilous hour. It was a sign of the times that he could address the Anti-Slavery Convention in the State House in January, 1858. His address ended on a jarring note, with one of his most tasteless parables. Not so that of July

4th, his last great utterance on slavery to his own congregation and to the world beyond its bounds. This was the address which Herndon carried back to Lincoln and which Lincoln read and marked. It ended with a conditional prophecy — that, if the people of America were faithful, the hundredth anniversary of the nation's birthday would find nowhere, in all the land, a slave. The fact outran his prophecy eleven years.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FRUITLESS QUEST

WRITING of the embodied saints, Colonel Higginson had put Parker among them as an able-bodied man, and in March, 1858, Parker wrote him, accepting gratefully the praise as formerly his due, though he was

> not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven.

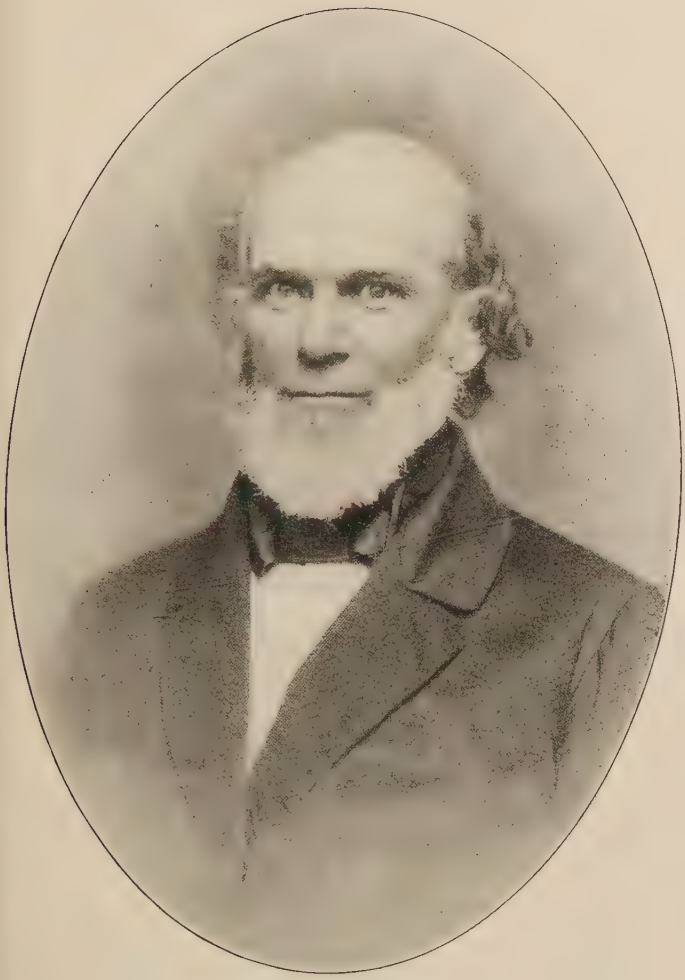
Do you know I could once *carry a barrel of cider* in my hands? I don't mean a glass at a time, — I could do that now, — but a *barrel* at a time. I have worked (not often, though) at farming *twenty hours* out of the twenty-four for several days together, when I was eighteen or twenty. I have often worked from twelve to seventeen hours a day in my study for a considerable period; and could do that *now*.

But with his great original strength and capacity for endurance there went the ailing habit of a constitution fundamentally threatened and weakened by the pulmonary disease that was hereditary in his family. Of his ten brothers and sisters eight had died of consumption, while the oldest brother, Isaac, had gone on to sixty in good health. It was Parker's hope, if he could pass the fifty

graver duties, which only home had supplied, that he might sail on serenely to the haven of a serene old age. But for certain accidents and much overwork, this might have been his course. He had been strictly temperate in food and drink, he had with much self-denial secured from each day a fair portion of sleep, he had been a good walker, and the hardest work did not wear upon him so much as compulsory idleness. But the journals and the letters tell of many miserable days. It will be remembered that when in Europe he had an aching head and side, and brought these doubtful companions home. In 1854 he writes Miss Hennell, "As long as I can stand upright I do well; the moment I resolve to lean a little I go plumb down, for there is nothing for me to lean upon." He thinks he "doesn't need rest so much as fun." In 1855 we find him constructing a health gauge. When he can write the next Sunday's sermon on Monday morning he is at the top of his condition, marked A. But he runs down as low as F, and lower, — "an approach to O for this season of the year." On his forty-third birthday, 1853, he writes that he has had admonitions that he is not to be an old man. He walks and works "with a will," not with "the spontaneous impulse that once required the will to check it."

There was no serious break, however, until April, 1856, when, lecturing in New Bedford, sight, hearing, and speech gave out. But he went to an apothecary's near by and came back after drinking

a bit of sherry and finished his lecture with great difficulty. "*I take this as a warning*, — not the first," he wrote. In the spring of 1857 he was miserably sick, and in July wrote an account of his sickness to W. H. Fish: In February he went to central New York to lecture. At East Albany there was an inundation and the train was left standing in it all night, and Parker got no dinner or supper, or breakfast the next morning except a tough bite in an Irish shanty. He woke with a sharp pain in his right side, not known before. He got to Syracuse that night and lectured there, took the night train for Rochester, and, arriving there in the early morning, was given a bed with damp sheets, whence the chills of an incipient fever the next day. Lectured in the evening and at Albany the next; got back to Boston Saturday and preached at Music Hall Sunday morning, and at Watertown in the afternoon. Was sick the next week, but lectured four times; so the next and next; then broke down utterly and was confined to the house for some weeks. As soon as he could stand on his feet an hour he began to preach again. This, he said, was a means of cure; it helped him so much to look once more into the faces of his people. His side kept up its ache, and there was an effusion of water on the chest that had barely subsided when the year 1858 brought its conflict with the Boston revivalists, with the pleasant alternation of his second visit to the Progressive Friends in Pennsylvania. After his last



THEODORE PARKER

*At the age of 48*

anti-slavery sermon, July 4, with Salmon P. Chase for its best listener, the summer vacation began, and a new friend, Mr. Joseph Lyman, to whom he became very much attached, and whom Miss Stevenson called "the lover," took him on a drive of seven hundred miles in a fine new wagon. Parker's eyes were open to all the natural beauties of the regions through which they drove and to all the economical conditions: —

> But we did see such neatness, thrift, comfort, and well-diffused wealth, as no other land in all the world can offer. If a southern Slaveholder could ride where we went, and see what he must, he would at once be convinced that his miserable system was a wretched failure. We went in by-roads, lived all the time in small towns, rested at the little country taverns, and not once saw a ragged American, and but one American at all affected by drink.

Soon after his return, instigated by Mr. Lyman, whose fears for Parker's health had been much aggravated on the drive, the Twenty-Eighth begged him to extend his vacation until his "bronchial affection" should be allayed. The year before they had raised his salary $500, making it $2500, and offered him six months vacation, with pulpit supply. He had refused both offers, and now he extended his vacation for but a week or two. Meantime he was very busy preparing the "Historic Americans." The "Franklin" was given before the Fraternity October 6th, and two others followed. The "Jefferson" was not delivered. Before the month

was over an anal fistula had made great progress, with dangerous symptoms, loss of flesh (twenty pounds), cough, debilitating sweats. A successful operation gave immense relief. In November he wrote Ripley that he had been on his back for three weeks, but his hopes shot up again like fire. He did not see why he should not live till he was eighty or ninety. "If we could lie under the great oak tree at West Roxbury, or ride about the wild little lanes together, I should soon be entirely well, for the vigor of your mind would inspire strength even into my body." November 24th he went thirty miles into the country to attend the funeral of a little boy. "The circumstances were so sad and peculiar that I could not leave the afflicted ones to the poor consolations of a stranger who did not believe, much less know, the infinite goodness of God." Getting into the cars he received a serious injury, which again took him off his feet *except Sundays* for three weeks. December 4th he kept Miss Cobbe's birthday "with true festal delight," it being also his good Deacon May's, the eighty-second.

January 1, 1859, he notes as the first New Year's day that had found him sick. "It looks as if this was the last of my new year's days on earth. I felt so when I gave each gift to-day; yet few men have more to live for than I. It seems as if I had just begun a great work." There was no sign of sickness in the sermon of January 2d, "What Religion may do for a Man: A Sermon for the New Year." It was the last.

A sermon for the next Sunday was prepared but not delivered, its subject "The Religion of Jesus and the Christianity of the Church," — clearly another rendering of the fatal "Transient and Permanent in Christianity." On Sunday morning there was a violent hemorrhage of the lungs, but from his bed he wrote a few words to his people, telling them why he could not preach, hoping they would not forget the contribution for the poor; adding, "I don't know when I shall look upon your welcome faces, which have so often cheered my spirit when my flesh was weak." Overwhelmed with grief the Society immediately voted its minister leave of absence for a year, his salary to be continued. Meantime he was to devote himself exclusively to the recovery of his health. He wrote to Mr. Manley, chairman of the Standing Committee, that he would make the pledge and keep it, and he did keep it as well as he could with his passion for knowledge and affection, though the letters that he wrote and the studies in which he engaged for the last year of his life were enough to drain a well man of his strength. January 27th he wrote a "Farewell Letter" to the Society, promising a fuller one before long, and the Society made an elaborate reply, abounding in the liveliest appreciation and the most tender feeling, which did not reach him until after his arrival in the West Indies. Signed by the Standing Committee and three hundred others, its loving inundation overflowed his heart with glad and mournful tears.

There was a consultation January 23d, and he was told that the consumptive trouble had gone so far that his chance of recovery was but one in ten. Whereupon he wrote in his journal, "I am ready to die if need be — nothing to fear. When I see the Inevitable I fall in love with her. I laugh at the odds of nine to one." A trip to the West Indies and thence to Europe was decided on. Letters of sympathy came to him by dozens and by scores from all parts of America and from across the sea. It was a revelation to him, and his heart was broken with delight. With the others came a slaveholder, humbly enrolling himself "among the millions who gratefully participate in the imperishable light of Theodore Parker's truth and goodness in the world." Great was Parker's fear that he should go away and fail to write some last kind word to every one who had been kind to him. One of the longest of these letters was to Dr. Francis, who had been so kind to him yet had so often disappointed him, for all the encouragement and stimulus he had afforded, and most of all for his anti-slavery example. To Dr. Bartol he wrote that in twenty-seven years he had never met him without pleasure. "In our long acquaintance — perilous times, too, it has been in — you never *did* or *said* or *looked* aught that was unkind toward me." To Dr. Gannett, a "poor scrawl with a pencil," thanking him for sermons that were among his early inspirations, and for the continuous example of his self-denying zeal. To

Dr. Palfrey, with gratitude for "the noble example of your conscientiousness in all public affairs." To Mr. Fish, "Really a man has not lived in vain who finds so many friends when he stands on the brink of the grave." To Sargent, remembering that "when all the rest of the Boston Association, except Bartol," turned against him, he was firmly and fastly his friend and did him great service. To Ripley, with blessings for his friendship's lofty cheer — "one of the brightest spots in my life which has had a deal of handsome sunshine." To Increase Smith, for days too precious to recall, they make his pulses fly so fast. To Mr. Alger, for the sweetness of the flowers he sent and the yet sweeter fragrance of his note. To Lydia Maria Child, for "some cheering words to a young fellow fighting his way to education in 1833 and for much more." To Salmon P. Chase, for his many kind letters and his great public service. To William Lloyd Garrison, answering a very noble letter, "Three men now living have done New England and the North great service, . . . all soldiers in the same great cause, William L. Garrison, Horace Mann, and R. W. Emerson. You took the most dangerous and difficult part, and no soldier ever fought with more gallant hardihood, no martyr ever more nobly bore what came as the earthly reward of his nobleness. . . . I am to thank you for what your character has taught me — it has been a continual Gospel of Strength. I value Integrity above all human virtues. I never knew yours to fail — no, nor even falter. God bless you for it!"

Besides these letters there were many others, the tenderest to members of his own society who were in affliction and to whom he could not go in the old way, so full of comforting and peace.

He left Boston February 3d, accompanied by his wife, Miss Stevenson, and Mr. George Cabot, who were to be the companions of his journeyings. The Karnac, on which they were to sail for Santa Cruz, did not sail until the 8th. Mr. Frothingham was one of those who saw him off, and tells of his gray, gaunt look at the Astor House, and his determined manner ; his looking out for everything and everybody, and his walking to the steamer with his friends in a sturdy fashion. There Mr. and Mrs. Howe met them and were their companions on the voyage which ended March 3d, including a five days stay at Havana with touchings at other ports. At Havana he parted with the Howes, and Mrs. Howe has written of the pathetic picture of his face as he looked over the side of the vessel and waved a last farewell. April 19th he finished his letter to the Twenty-Eighth which was printed with the title "Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister." I remember getting it the day that it came out in Boston, — what a bright looking book it was, its appearance matching its contents. In an appendix to Weiss's "Life of Parker" it makes sixty closely printed royal octavo pages. It is the best Life of Parker that has so far been written, and there will never be a better. A particularly noble passage is that reviewing the intellectual and

moral forces that were deployed upon the scene of his early ministry. The intellectual and moral aspects of his ministry are set forth with equal care; his religious teachings under three heads, The Infinite Perfection of God, The Adequacy of Man for all his Functions, Absolute or Natural Religion. Of his lectures he dared hope that, lecturing to sixty thousand every year for ten years, he had made a definite impression on one half of one per cent, and that would be three thousand souls. His elaborate criticism of Unitarianism was not unfair, considering its temporal range. It did not then "rejoice in the Lord" after his glorious fashion. But elements were to qualify its future which he did not foresee, especially the development of the scientific spirit traversing the transcendental. No man ever had the sense of a mission more profoundly than Parker or the conviction of the finality of his main beliefs. Both came out very strongly in the "Experience." The second is enforced by one of his happiest illustrations, that of the English man-of-war which in the dim morning light hammered away at what seemed to be a hostile craft but proved to be a towering rock which could not be destroyed or sunk. Quite as impregnable he thought his Absolute Religion, quite as mistaken those who fancied it a floating, perishable thing. He consoled himself for his approaching silence with this thought: "A live man may harm his own cause; a dead one cannot defile his clean immortal doctrines with unworthy hands."

The letter ended in a strain of grateful recognition of his people's love and trust.

One passage in the letter shows the alertness of his mind in his new environment. His powers of observation never slept.

Sermons are never out of my mind; and when sickness brings on me the consciousness that I have nought to do, its most painful part, still, by long habit all things will take this form; and the gorgeous vegetation of the tropics, their fiery skies so brilliant all the day, and star-lit too with such exceeding beauty all the night; the glittering fishes in the market, as many colored as a gardener's show, these Josephs of the sea; the silent pelicans, flying forth at morning and back again at night; the strange, fantastic trees, the dry pods rattling their historic bones all day, while the new bloom comes fragrant out beside, a noiseless prophecy; the ducks rejoicing in the long expected rain; a negro on an ambling pad; the slender-legged, half-naked negro children in the street, playing their languid games, or oftener screaming 'neath their mother's blows, amid black swine, hens, and uncounted dogs; the never-ceasing clack of women's tongues, more shrewd than female in their shrill violence; the unceasing, multifarious kindness of our hostess; and, overtowering all, the self-sufficient West Indian Creole pride, alike contemptuous of toil, and ignorant and impotent of thought — all these common things turn into poetry as I look on or am compelled to hear, and then transfigure into sermons, which come also spontaneously by night and give themselves to me, and even in my sleep say they are meant for you. Shall they ever be more than the walking of

> a sick man in his sleep,
> Three paces and then faltering?

Besides this sensuous observation of a man "standing," as he wrote, "up to his neck in the grave," there was the old passion for statistics hard at work, and the results of his investigations into such things as climate, rainfall, fruits, exports of rum, sugar, and molasses, condition of the negroes and the women, cover many pages of his journal and flow over in his letters to such friends as he knew would care for them. He was quite sure that he had come upon the true paternity of Alexander Hamilton, and wrote Ripley accordingly at some length.[1]

His principal engagement, however, was with the things that he had left behind. He was greedy for every scrap of political and local information:

Ah me! who preaches at the Music Hall? What was done at the Annual Meeting? Who is sick? Who is *sick no more?* How is poor old Mr. Cass, Chambers St. Court? If he is alive, send him a box of strawberries from me in their time and I will pay the price.

Sunday. I shall always spend an hour and a half *in my own way* when the Twenty-Eighth is at worship.

March 13, Sunday. Snow knee-deep at home, I suppose. Not many at meeting, perhaps, on account of the storm; and here the fair sky seems eternal.

March 20, Sunday. G. W. Curtis lectures at the Music Hall to-day, where I think I shall not speak

[1] Parker's opinion — that Hamilton was the illegitimate son of a Mr. Stevens, of Antigua, and half brother to Dr. Edward Stevens, of Philadelphia — is confirmed, somewhat obscurely, by Mr. Lodge in his Hamilton volume in the "American Statesmen" series.

again. Emerson has been there once and Solger[1] and Johnson once. I can't keep the Twenty-Eighth out of my head.

There are many such entries. Wherever his body, his soul was in the Music Hall every Sunday morning, worshiping with his people, imaginary sermons throbbing in his mind.

Leaving Santa Cruz May 11th and St. Thomas May 16th, he reached London June 1st, "too feeble to do much!" — what he considered little being enough to tire a vigorous man. It included visits to Buckle, Charles Mackay, Martineau, Newman, Tayler, all the great show places, and some in which he had a special interest. He heard Huxley lecture and Martineau preach, approving his sermon, not the liturgy. The Charity Sermon in St. Paul's did not impress him so favorably as it did Thackeray: "eight thousand children fainting with hunger while they listened to a wretched sermon on human depravity." His friend Lyman reached London June 2d. "He took command of me as soon as he arrived, and hoisted his broad pennant, so that I sail under his colors." Mr. Lyman had great skill as a nurse and care-taker, and enjoyed Parker's absolute confidence in these particulars, rashly extended to some others, as when he made him his literary executor. In various letters he sums up the result of his West India episode.

[1] Written plainly in the journal, and not Weiss's mistake for Alger, as I at first supposed. Colonel Higginson dimly recalls the name, but nothing more.

He is much stronger, but the critical symptoms have changed but little, if at all. In a letter to Misses Cobbe and Carpenter we have the astonishing, almost incredible statement, "In all my illness, and it is now in its third year, I have not had a single sad hour." He has "such absolute confidence in the Infinite Love that he is sure death is always a blessing, a step onward and upward." June 12th London was left for Paris, where he met Sumner, "the finest sight I have yet seen in Europe — he is now so much better than I hoped. . . . It is a continual feast to see him." Driving and walking he could tire Sumner out, and his stomach for sight-seeing was of Gargantuan capacity. Arriving at Montreux, Lake Geneva, June 22d, "there were our blessed friends [the Hunts and Apthorps], all well, and not at all changed since 1856 save only that Willy [Hippopotamousie] has grown older, stouter, browner, and more boy-like." These were to be Parker's loved companions for the remainder of his life.

There was no day without a sign of his diligence in writing letters. That of June 25th was a long one for the annual picnic of the Twenty-Eighth, much more substantial fare than picnics commonly afford. To his brother Isaac there were long letters from the farmer's point of view, to Mrs. Cheney letters about things after her kind, — the wise and good people he had met, among them his much valued friend and correspondent, Professor H. D. Rogers, — and how Ellen Craft

had called on him, his last night in London. The Franco-Austrian war was going on, and he agonized over the dreadful things that were happening less than 150 miles away from his own exile and peace in one. "Think of 40,000 or 50,000 able-bodied men in the prime of life killed, wounded, or missing in one day of battle! I wish the human race might learn to see who the men are that thus misdirect the wrathful instincts of our nature to such wickedness."

In company with Mr. Lyman he left Montreux July 26th, and arrived the next day at his friend Desor's delightful mountain châlet at Combe-Varin, overlooking the lovely Val de Travers with eight or ten villages nestling in the bosoms of its surrounding hills, or spread upon the valley floor. There was, perhaps, too much intellectual excitement under Desor's roof, it being his habit to bring together men of scientific attainments from all sides. Parker entered heartily into the generous rivalry of eager minds, wallowing in the great deep of their information, and planning for an album of their papers his last elaborate piece of philosophical theology, which he worked out in Rome, "A Bumblebee's Thoughts on the Plan and Purpose of the Universe," a genial satire on the assumption of the Bridgewater Treatises that all things are made for human ends, and the much wider assumption that in mankind we have the climax of creative energy. Moleschott, with Vogt and (later) Büchner the main strength of German Mate-

chalet, was one of the proprietors. He regarded the points of Parker's spiritualistic creed as [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible], but knew no [illegible] of them.

Happily there was physical exercise as well as intellectual, but here, also, Parker may possibly have overdone. Not content with felling the smaller trees, he attacked one of the larger too, and in half an hour its length lay on the ground. The muscles of his back and arms had not forgotten how to swing an axe as when he was a boy. A beautiful friendship, formed at Combe Varin was that with Dr. Hans Lorenz Küchler, preacher to the German-Catholic church of Heidelberg. Parker planned to visit him, but, on the very day of his departure from the Desor chalet, Küchler died of apoplexy. Parker remained with Desor for six weeks, his health improving, especially his weight, until it was 164 pounds, more than it had been for twenty-nine years, while his strength was such that he could take long walks and lug seventy pounds of baggage from the steamboat to the train.

Famous men were dying in America, — John Augustus, the simple-hearted Boston philanthropist, Horace Mann, and Rufus Choate, — and he asked to be in his old place and preach the moral of their lives. Much that he would have said can be gathered from his letters to Dr. Howe and others. His sermon for John Augustus would have been "The Power of Individual Justice and Philanthropy;" on Choate, "The Abuse of Great Talents and Great Opportunities." Of Mann he wrote to Dr. Howe: —

I think there is but one man in America who has done the nation so much service — that is Garrison. . . . Garrison had more destructiveness and more courage and also more moral directness in his modes of executing his plans. Mann did not know that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points in morals as in mathematics.

This letter was so full that the loss of the sermon that might have been is hardly felt. He mourns that the Twenty-Eighth has "only a lecturer from week to week;" but surely it is a sick man's fancy when he writes that even Emerson "never appeals directly to the conscience, still less to the religious faculty in man." Besides, he cannot bear to have his people miss the help of prayer. "I love the custom of public prayers, and have taken more delight in praying with like-hearted people than ever in preaching to like-minded or otherwise-minded; yet few men love preaching so well." "Dr. Channing used to say, 'It would be a great thing to get rid of the long prayer in our churches.'" Parker would have "the prayer of pious genius in its place." And then he likes "the old custom of reading the Bible, — the best parts of it, — and the singing of hymns."

He got back to Montreux just before his forty-ninth birthday, August 24th, and kept it with uncommon tenderness, convinced, for all the superficial gain, that it was the last. Under the same conviction he wrote a letter of resignation to the Twenty-Eighth Society. This the society declined

to accept, preferring, should he never come back, that he should be their minister so long as he lived. The sheep without a shepherd grieved his spirit: —

> Especially is the hour of their service a sad one — not exactly sad but anxious, and I must give up the observance of it. I feel much like the mother whom the German legends tell of, that died in child-bed and every night left her grave and came to the bedside of her child and wept. . . . I leave my grave and weep at the hour of Sunday service of the Twenty-Eighth. Yet I shall see them no more.

Meantime word had come to him of various doings among his Unitarian friends which had much interest for him. The younger Unitarian ministers and Divinity students were coming over to his side, and in 1857 the class of that year had elected him class-preacher, but their choice was negatived by the faculty. Instead of leaving the school, as they were tempted to do, the young men contented themselves with a manly protest against the violation of the school's essential principle of intellectual freedom. At the Divinity School alumni meeting in July, 1859, Rev. M. D. Conway, a graduate of '54, offered a resolution of sympathy with Parker in his illness, which expressed a hope of his return with renewed strength to his post of duty. James Freeman Clarke, not alone, supported the resolution, which was opposed by others; by Dr. Hedge, while agreeing with its substance; by some altogether. Dr. Bellows was

to address the alumni, and, the hour for his sermon having arrived, a resolution to adjourn the preliminary meeting was entertained. Dr. Gannett wished to hear Dr. Bellows, but would not have the Association forfeit its honor by thus shirking the question. In spite of this protest the adjournment was carried. The newspaper account of this matter is inserted in Parker's journal with slight comments. He wrote to Freeman Clarke about it more fully, protesting an indifference to which in reality he could not quite attain.

Dr. Bellows's sermon was the most celebrated one of his life, "The Suspense of Faith." It made more stir than any Unitarian sermon had made since Parker's "Transient and Permanent." It reflected one of Dr. Bellows's most hopeless and reactionary moods, and Parker was too quick to assume that it was significant of denominational backsliding.[1] It was not even significant of any permanent conviction on the part of the great-hearted Bellows, who was nothing if not oscillatory in the swing of his theological opinions.

October 21st, Parker and his friends arrived in Rome, and by the 23d were established at No. 16 Via delle Quattro Fontane, the Apthorps on another floor of the same house. He at once began to gather books and maps for the study of the ancient and mediæval city. But Rome, as if she

[1] A little later we find Parker rejoicing in Dr. Hedge as president of the Unitarian Association and Freeman Clarke as its secretary, and predicting "a good time coming" for the Unitarian body.

knew the heretic, gave him a cold reception. He had felt no such cold since he left Boston except for a day off the coast of England in May. The result was a worse cough, with sleepless nights and other bad symptoms. He was bettering again by the middle of November. The last dated entry in his journal is a draft or copy of his letter resigning his Boston charge. The pocket note-books were kept up longer, and on December 31st he sets down "A bad cold lately with a shocking cough. A little blood comes now and then. . . . *Here endeth the last year.*" It did not end till it had brought him one of the acutest sorrows of his life in the failure of John Brown's raid and his imprisonment and death. The raid culminated October 17th; the execution was December 2d. Parker's letters of November and December reflect his painful interest in those tragical events, but not with such depth of feeling as his measure of responsibility for them would seem to have required.[1] For himself he had nothing to fear, but his anxiety for the safety of his coadjutors may have checked his spontaneity. He pasted into his journal newspaper accounts of various John Brown meetings, with the splendid Music Hall sermon of Edwin M. Wheelock and also one by Charles G. Ames, preached in Bloomington, Ill. He wrote to his friend Manley, "No man has died in this cen-

[1] The imperfection of the record at this point deserves consideration. Incriminating documents were ruthlessly destroyed by Parker's Boston friends.

tury whose chance of immortality is worth half so much as John Brown's. A man who crowns a noble life with such a glorious act as John Brown's at Harper's Ferry is not forgotten in haste." To Francis Jackson he wrote a letter which may very properly be regarded as his last sermon, so evidently is it substantially what his John Brown sermon would have been. The sermon might have been longer, but the letter falls little short of six thousand words. For obvious reasons, it is less personal and intimate than we could wish. It is an elaborate defense of the right of insurrection by an oppressed people or in their behalf. The lack of insurrectionary spirit in the negro was in Parker's eyes his main defect, but he hoped for better things. He wrote : —

> Brown will die like a martyr, I think, and also like a saint. His noble demeanor, his unflinching bravery, his gentleness, his calm religious trust in God, and his words of truth and soberness will make a profound impression on the hearts of Northern men ; yes, and on Southern men. . . . Let the American State hang his body and the American Church damn his soul. Still the blessing of such as are ready to perish will fall on him and the universal justice of the Infinitely Perfect God will make him welcome home. The road to heaven is as short from the gallows as from the throne.

This letter was at once published by the Parker Fraternity. The journal, which had now become a commonplace book merely, gave many other proofs of Parker's ruling passions, strong in his

decay. There are pages of notes on different editions of the Vulgate, and the last entry is a full, closely written quarto page on the mythical Pope Joan. The letters abound in archæological data, and discussions and criticisms on the Roman ecclesiastical system and European and American politics. He neglected painting and sculpture, writing Ripley that he cared less for the fine arts than for "the coarse arts which feed, clothe, house, and comfort a people;" that he would rather be a Franklin than a Michael Angelo; rather his boy, if he had one, should be a Stephenson than a Rubens. He lived a social life, seeing much of the Storys and the Brownings, something of Hawthorne, Bryant, Mrs. Stowe, Charlotte Cushman, and Gibson the English sculptor. Dr. Frothingham, the conservative rationalist of the Boston Association, was spending the winter in Rome, and he and Parker found that they had much in common, and the dying man how kind the other's heart. Parker's wealth of knowledge was a miracle to Browning and all those who got a taste of his quality. He knew more about Roman geology, antiquities, habits of the people, ecclesiastical machinery, than those who had had several seasons in the city. Macaulay knew his English chancellors, but was staggered by the popes. Parker, no doubt, could brave the list without a fear of being slaughtered among the Innocents. His physical energy kept pace with his intellectual, notwithstanding the persistent ravages of his disease. He

tramped about Rome for six or seven hours a day, climbing the one hundred and twenty steps to his quarters on his return each day with an undaunted will. That he was steadily losing flesh again, may have made the walking easier. Early in April, a month before his death, he goes upon a donkey-ride to Frascati and Tusculum, twelve miles from Rome. The abundance of his life impresses us until the final stage.

From the beginning of the new year there was little change at any time for the better. The season was uncommonly bad, and his archæological studies took him to places that were too damp and chill for his condition. How wide, yet careful, these studies were, we are informed by a letter to Charles Ellis, written January 29th. It had not been posted when the news came of Mr. Ellis's death. He was the leading spirit among those who first invited Parker to come and lecture in Boston. To his house Parker went for his last visit before leaving Boston, and now he lavished all his wealth of consolation on the widow's lonely heart. Writing January 16th, Mr. Apthorp gives a careful account of his condition. He marks a constant diminution of vitality; he is more nervous and desponding, looks thinner in the face; complexion paler; eyes losing the old expressive fire. Mrs. Apthorp tells me of the reaction from stimulating medicines as sometimes disturbing the perfect balance of his judgment of persons and events and inducing an irritation which was foreign

to his proper self. Yet for the most part it was he who cheered and comforted the friends who watched with waning hope the variations of his condition from week to week. In Mrs. Parker's slow and passive disposition new energies were quickened by the stern requirements of the situation. He had said that she had always been his baby, but now the relations were reversed: he was the clinging child; hers was the mother heart. They had not been such lovers since the days in Watertown when they were young together.

In the later winter he set out to write an autobiography of his early life, hoping to bring it down to the completion of his twenty-first year. But as he "never could write in *foul, dark weather*," and there was little else that year in Rome, he did not get further than his eighth year. This precious fragment is printed entire in Weiss's second chapter, and I have quoted from it freely in my first. Until mid-April he was almost as keenly alive as ever to whatever of intellectual or moral significance was transpiring anywhere. He hailed the free-trade policy of Gladstone as "one of the most important movements of the age." There are two allusions to Darwin's "Origin of Species," the first edition of which was published November 24, 1859, the second January 7, 1860. Apparently he did not see the book,[1] but read some review of it and was "persuaded of it" as one of the most

[1] Mr. Frothingham seems to have had reason for a different impression.

important scientific works that England had produced. It is evident that he would have welcomed Darwin's ideas cordially. "Science wants a God that is a constant force and a constant intelligence, immanent in every particle of matter." Darwin "does not believe in Agassiz's foolish notion of an interposition of God when a new form of lizard makes its appearance on the earth." From a new speech of Seward's he expected little, since hearing Mr. Lyman's account of it; "more from Abraham Lincoln at the Cooper Institute." But the sad refrain, "To be weak is to be miserable," is that of almost every letter now. He yearns for Boston Common and all sorts of little far-off things in which he had once been glad; he writes to his dear John Ayres that he would like to eat one of his Baldwin apples or a "Roxbury rustin," in the parlance of his early years.

The last letter that he wrote with pen and ink (April 14th) celebrated the arrival of Desor, "so big, with such a chest and arms and legs!" that it made Parker feel strong to look at him. Desor's impressions of Parker were most miserable. He found him ten years older; an old man. He had determined to leave for Florence on the 21st, but Desor feared he would die in some tavern on the way. Parker replied, "I will not die here. I will not leave my bones in this detested soil; I will go to Florence and I will get there — that I promise you." His last letter (in pencil) was to Miss Stevenson, who had gone on to Florence in ad-

vance. He did not think the end so near. He wrote of going home to America September 1st. It seems that he was still going out, for he thanks God that he shall have to climb the one hundred and twenty steps but five times more.

The journey of one hundred and fifty miles was made by *vetturino* in five days. They must wake him when they reached the Roman frontier, if he was asleep when they got there. He was not, as it proved, and he saluted with enthusiasm the colors of free Italy. Now he could die in peace.

But before the end one great pleasure was in store for him: a meeting with Miss Cobbe, with whom he had been in correspondence for a dozen years. It was to her that he said, "I have had great powers and have only half used them." And again, — the true word of a wandering mind, — "There are two Theodore Parkers now: one is dying here in Italy; the other I have planted in America. He will live there and finish my work." She brought him lovely flowers, and their touch and scent awakened memories of flowers that grew three thousand miles away and many years ago. "Dear Sallie Russell gave me these," he said. There were anxieties — as to when the vessel was going that would take him to America and about some confusion in his library. Clarke and Phillips would come to his funeral. John Ayres must come over after dinner and bring a last year's apple or a new melon. He did not forget his customary thoughtfulness for others, so long as consciousness

remained. In one of the last night-watches he said to Mrs. Parker, "Lay down your head on the pillow, Bearsie, and sleep; you have not slept for a long time."

During the last days there was great weakness but no suffering. He gradually lapsed into a state in which he drew his breath so quietly that those who bent their faces over him could hardly tell the moment of his death. It was Thursday, the 10th of May. On Sunday, as near as might be to the hour of his habitual standing at his desk in Music Hall, he was buried in the pleasant Protestant cemetery, just outside the city, by the Pinti Gate. An old friend read the Beatitudes, and other service there was none. But it so happened that Florence held a feast that day, and the streets were all abloom with flags, as for a faithful soldier welcomed home.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AFTER DEATH THE JUDGMENT

The Atlantic cable of 1858 had been a whole month's wonder and then had fallen silent. It was not until 1866 that it again became vocal. Nevertheless it is a strange thing that the news of Parker's death, May 10th, did not reach Boston before May 29th. On the evening of that day the Unitarians held their annual festival in the Music Hall, and several of the speakers referred to the overshadowing event which made the great hall seem a conscious mourner for the manly voice to which it never would again resound. Straight from his heart, and with unstinted praise, James Freeman Clarke spoke of his friend, paying a noble tribute to his intellectual and moral worth, and frankly accepting for the Unitarian body the paternity of this man-child who had proved so troublesome. The anti-slavery journals tempered their doubts of his theology with recognition of his anti-slavery zeal. The "Advertiser" said, "From whom has his rough surgery not cut away some old prejudices, to whom has his treatment not brought some cure, whose eyes has he not opened to such views of controversies of never-ending importance as would

otherwise never have been attained." The pro-slavery "Courier" said, "He is gone, and let no one imitate his bad qualities." The Republican "Atlas" noted that "the trio of leading ultra abolitionists was broken" by his death, but conceded to him "the character of a Puritan with the mind of a rationalist." The secular papers for the most part set an example of consideration which the religious papers did not follow. The "Independent," remembering his anti-slavery word and work, spoke warmly of his character, but deplored his theological views as "only a legitimate growth of liberal Christianity." The "Observer" thought that "he could scarcely have been ranked as a religious man." The "Christian Register" marked his "unforgiving bitterness to opponents" as "almost the sole defect of his character." The "Liberator" had only praise for him, whether as theologian, reformer, or private individual, and it was inevitable that the session of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, May 31st, should be mainly devoted to a series of generous appreciations of his character and his practical efficiency. The speakers were Samuel J. May, John T. Sargent, Wendell Phillips, Garrison, James Freeman Clarke. There had been little time for second thoughts, but the unpremeditated words were not lacking in sobriety. Mr. Clarke enlarged the testimony which he had given at the Unitarian festival, and brought his poetic insight to the interpretation of his friend's career. With much beside, he said: —

So tender was he, so affectionate was he, that no one was ever near to Parker as a friend, as an intimate companion, without wondering how it was that men could ever think of him as hard, stern, severe, cold, and domineering, because, in all the private relations of life, he was as docile as a child to the touch of love; and it was only necessary, if you had any fault to find with anything that he had said or done, to go to him, and tell him just what your complaint was, or what your difficulty was, and just as likely as not he would at once admit, if there was the least reason in the complaint, that he was wrong.

The next Sunday Samuel J. May was the preacher to whom the Twenty-Eighth turned for consolation, and he poured it from an overflowing heart. At the same meeting resolutions prepared by Mr. Sanborn were passed by the Society expressing the sense of its incalculable loss; its gratitude for the high privilege it had enjoyed. June 17th there was a memorial service, filling the hall as on Parker's greatest days. The Scripture was the psalm of psalms, the 139th, and the Beatitudes; Parker's selection, as were the hymns also: "While thee I seek, protecting Power," "Nearer, my God, to thee," and Andrews Norton's "My God, I thank thee." Mr. Sanborn read a severely simple ode which he had written for the day. Charles M. Ellis, a son of Parker's first Boston adherent, spoke for the Society. If the estimate was generous, it did not exceed the fact, and this is equally true of the other addresses that were made. The nearer view of a man's life is generally

the truer view. What those who knew him think of him is of more importance than the verdict of history. What his life signified for his time is the main question. This it is that really signifies for the succeeding generations. It is the life that goes into the social structure most profoundly, not that which is best remembered and most quoted, that is the life best worth living. Emerson's address was a third with his memorial addresses upon Lincoln and John Brown — an apt description of Parker with many pregnant sentences of impersonal scope. Surely he cannot be suspected of indiscriminate eulogy, yet there was no loftier praise that day than his.

> Ah, my brave brother! it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense, and your place cannot be supplied. But you will already be consoled in the transfer of your genius, knowing well that the nature of the world will affirm to all men, in all times, that which for twenty-five years you valiantly spoke; that the winds of Italy murmur the same truth over your grave; the winds of America over these bereaved streets; that the sea which bore your mourners home affirms it, the stars in their courses and the inspirations of youth; whilst the polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted learning and disgraced graces, rot and are forgotten with their double tongue saying all that is sordid for the corruption of man.

Wendell Phillips spoke at much greater length than Emerson, but without one superfluous word. His theological difference did not blind him to the

reality of Parker's religion and the splendor of his service to mankind. Unable to be present, David A. Wasson wrote in a careful letter this among other things: —

> He was capable of a mighty wrath, but it was born of his love, and was never expended on account of his private wrongs; he was angry and sinned not, for it was the anger of the prophet; indignation at wrongs done to humanity; a grand, a noble, a sacred passion.

George William Curtis stood in Parker's place, July 16th, and spoke of Modern Infidelity, a lecture which he had delivered more than forty times during the recent lecture season, but now with an "improvement" which it had not had before. In an elaborate passage of beautiful and fervid eloquence he hailed Parker as the supreme antagonist of that modern infidelity he had described, infidelity to principle, to justice, to humanity. His personal recollections of the man were as forget-me-nots interwoven with the wreath of shining laurel which he laid on Parker's grave. Many were the sermons that were preached in churches of all kinds, the consciousness that the great voice was forever hushed dulling here and there the edge of honest blame. Dr. Furness said, "If great learning and extraordinary intellectual ability and a hearty love of truth be the qualifications for the pursuit and attainment of truth, there is no man left among us whom it does not become to use modesty in pronouncing judgment upon Theodore Parker's the-

ology, for few are there better qualified than he was, in the respect just referred to, to form a sound opinion." Dr. Bellows, whose "suspense of faith" had not yet worked itself out into a better mood, "would not affirm certainly that Parker was a lost soul, but knew that he did not accept the conditions of salvation." Some twenty years later he made complete amends for this utterance, when, on the hundredth anniversary of Channing's birth, he accorded Parker hardly a lower place than Channing on the roll of Unitarian honor, indispensable for the completion of the work which Channing had begun. James Freeman Clarke's sermon wrote large what he had twice spoken in the course of the week. Intellect, affection, will — all in full and harmonious activity — are, he said, the signs of the great man, and he found them all in Parker in full measure. William Henry Channing wrote that he had often said to those grieved by Parker's severity of denunciation, "Do not be frightened by the stone dogs and griffins at the gate: within is a rare garden." Mr. Alger lavished upon Parker's memory all the resources of his rhetoric, which veiled but could not hopelessly obscure the noble outlines of his thought. Especially noteworthy was his analysis and defense of Parker's merciless dealing with the popular theology and political iniquity. Dr. Bartol was less generous with the dead than he had been with the living man, and has long since outgrown much of the criticism that he made. He found Parker's polemic temper un-

christian, yet remembered Channing's crying out, "Should any contempt of wrong be like the Christian's!" Of the many sermons preached in Parker's honor or dispraise but few have been preserved, and the collection [1] is particularly weak in orthodox examples. In these I seem to find much kindly disposition to say all that could be said in honor of the heretic. Yet one Methodist preacher, since highly distinguished, said, "No open peculator from Boston's treasury, no unrelenting, heartless landlord, no dissolute public officer, no wholesale or retail rumseller, no pimp of North Street or seducer of Boston has ever wrought, in my judgment, such extensive, effectual, irretrievable mischief in this city, since the advent of this distinguished errorist in it, as he." Another Methodist preacher assailed him with many weapons, theological, philosophical, and critical, yet ended with a glowing tribute to his large-hearted charity, his brave treatment of respectable iniquity, and his service to the slave: "Many a fugitive, fleeing with his life in his hand and his eye on the star, will feel his heart sink as he marks the light grow dim; for a bright ray is quenched out of that polar star."

In the house of his friends Parker found no better eulogist than O. B. Frothingham,[2] who, no-

[1] See this in Boston Public Library. For a partial list see Allibone, and also for a list of reviews of Parker's books and criticisms of particular sermons and his general course.

[2] Unless I except Samuel Johnson's *Theodore Parker*, which, as we now have it, published in 1890, is made up from several lectures, inclusive of one given in Music Hall soon after Parker's

thing if not critical, mingled with lofty, well-considered praise some frank and fearless indications of what seemed to him to be defects; here and there, I have imagined, "hoist with his own petar," disclosing by his criticism not so much Parker's as his own defect. Himself weak in sentiment, he thought Parker had too much, yet too little religious sensibility. To go from Parker to Martineau, he said, is to go from a New England meeting-house to a cathedral. In Parker we miss "the atmosphere of devout feeling, the mystery, the awe, the worship, the chastened reverence that makes allowance for all expressions." Mr. Frothingham's explanation is that Parker's religious sensibility "bore no proportion to his inordinate intellectual power." But I find Parker's religious sensibility much greater than his intellectual power. There was the difference indicated, but we must look elsewhere for an explanation — to Parker's exaggeration of Martineau's conspicuous defect, that of looking for the significance of religion too rigidly to its intellectual contents. Less questionable is Mr. Frothingham's deliverance when he says, "He was the grandest Theist of the time. . . . No teacher has unfolded a conception of God so sub-

death. Nothing written about Parker, in brief, is more deserving of attention than this exalted presentation of the form and spirit of his life. From time to time during the forty years which have elapsed since Parker's death there have been many careful studies of the man, with an amount of casual reference that would make a larger book than this of mine; some of it, like Mrs. Howe's in her recent *Reminiscences*, of very great interest and charm.

lime, so clear, so overwhelming in glory and light as his." It was over against this that the traditional conception seemed to Parker utterly monstrous and abominable, and he made little or no allowance for the selective principle in popular belief or for those ideal elements which find their symbols in doctrines which intellectually, morally, and æsthetically are intolerably hideous or grotesque.

In October following Parker's death the "Atlantic" published an appreciation of Parker by Colonel Higginson which remains to this day one of the most excellent that have appeared.[1] It was warm with personal affection, without any failure of clear-sighted apprehension of Parker's intellectual and moral worth. Strangely enough it was weakest on that side where Colonel Higginson knew Parker best, that of the anti-slavery reformer. He makes up what is lacking here in his "Cheerful Yesterdays" and elsewhere. The "Atlantic" article was a subject of correspondence between Lowell, then editing the magazine, and Higginson. Lowell thought Parker had more *force* than *power*, whatever that might mean. Other notable appreciations are those of J. H. Allen and D. A. Wasson in the "Examiner" for January and July, 1864, both reviewing Weiss's "Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker" which appeared late in 1863.

Weiss was pure genius, and had no mere talent for biography or anything else. Fantastical in

[1] Lately republished in Colonel Higginson's *Contemporaries*.

their style and chaotic in their disarrangement, his two royal octavos did not make a simple impression on those who could withdraw themselves from the appalling national tragedy of 1864 to study the character of one of the most conspicuous actors in its earlier scenes. With many penetrating judgments, it was the habit of the book to treat as comedy much which had been to Parker anything but that. But there was the wealth of Parker's correspondence poured out in a tumultuous flood which has been my continual despair, so limited the space at my command. Here was conclusive testimony to the abundance of Parker's intellectual acquirements, to his quick reaction upon these, and to the prodigality with which he gave anything he had alike to friends and foes. Here was the anti-slavery part of Parker's life exhibited with a sympathy and fullness that left little to desire. The surprise of the book for the ill-informed was the tender secret piety which breathed from many a page; that and the sensitive and loving heart which seemed to be at variance with what had been conceived to be his joy of battle, his delight in giving stunning blows. A year later, in French, and at once translated, came Dr. Albert Réville's "Life and Writings of Theodore Parker," very happily conceived, and finding in the Prophet that type of character which Parker exemplified as he did no other, and to a degree unparalleled in his own time. An English life by Mr. Peter Dean (1877) is excellent within narrow

limits, the liberal quotations from Parker's writings being made with much discrimination. Frances E. Cooke's "Story of Theodore Parker" (1883), which is intended for young people, catches the spirit of his life in an exceptional manner and degree. It is, however, disfigured by many inaccuracies. The "Biography" by O. B. Frothingham appeared in 1874. Some have found in it too much of critical detachment; therewith a lack of hearty sympathy with the man described. And it is true that since Parker sailed away in 1859, and Frothingham stood at the wharf's end watching him till he "melted from the smallness of a gnat to air," he had put an ocean's width between his own philosophic method and that of Parker. There are marks of this recession in the book, yet such was Frothingham's gift for seizing with imaginative sympathy upon another's point of view, and so tenderly did he regret his lost illusions, that his "Life of Parker" did not, I think, suffer any serious detriment on this account. Much careful study has made it far more beautiful for me than it had been to my careless reading, and gladly would I sink this craft of mine if, by so doing, that might renew its course, and carry its rich freight to friendly and to alien men.

Besides these literary monuments Parker had others, while as yet his memory was green in many faithful hearts. Of one of these I have already spoken: the great cubic block of granite with which his Boston friends marked the site of the house

in which he was born. His grave in Florence was at once marked with a gray marble stone, simple as those that mark in Lexington the places where

The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The inscription — his own choice — could not have been simpler than it was: "Theodore Parker, Born at Lexington, Mass., United States of America, Aug. 24, 1810, Died at Florence, May 10, 1860." Making due pilgrimage to the sacred spot in 1887, I found nothing in its appearance for regret or change. But about this time the desire became imperative for a more expressive monument, and, Mr. Theodore Stanton leading and many following, the means for its erection were gathered, and the design was intrusted to Parker's friend, William Story, the distinguished American sculptor. The design is very beautiful: Parker's face, in half-relief, is encircled by a laurel wreath, and to the inscription on the original stone is added, after Parker's name, "The Great American Preacher," and at the end, "His name is engraved in marble, his virtues in the hearts of those he helped to free from slavery and superstition." At the unveiling of the monument,[1] Thanksgiving Day, 1891, an appropriate address was made by the Hon. Charles Tuckerman; a poem was read by

[1] For a full account see the *Christian Register*, January 7, 1892. In the same number will be found an article, with illustrations, describing the proposed Boston statue of Parker, with accessory symbolical figures, long since completed but never set up, it having failed of the approval of those having authority in

Mr. Story; the American flag, which at first concealed the work, was drawn aside by Grace Ellery Channing, a granddaughter of Dr. Channing.

Another monument to Parker was the "Parker Memorial Meeting House," built by the Twenty-Eighth Society in 1873. Since Parker's death the Society had met with various misfortunes. The building of the great organ had driven it from Music Hall, and the exigencies of commerce from the Melodeon, to which it had returned. The need of a permanent home was felt, and the Parker Memorial was built in answer to this need. There had been settled ministers for short periods, David A. Wasson and James Vila Blake, and always a cordial welcome to "men of light and leading," ordained of men, or by God only, to preach good tidings. But the fierce light that beat from Parker's fame made too conspicuous the shortcomings of the best of his successors as ministers of the Society, and the reliance upon casual genius was too precarious to maintain the Society in a flourishing condition. In 1889 the property was made over to the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches in trust for religious uses, and has been faithfully administered upon lines congenial with the spirit of Parker's various activity. He owed the Benevolent Fraternity so much (indirectly) for his

such matters. The design can hardly be considered fortunate or in keeping with Parker's love of simple things. It is now proposed to place the statue, without the subordinate figures, in front of the new West Roxbury church, that in which Parker preached having been injured by fire beyond repair.

"chance to be heard in Boston" that it was obvious poetic justice for his friends to make it the almoner of their bounty to the community, amounting to some $80,000.

Mrs. Parker outlived her husband more than twenty years, dying April 9, 1881. More loyal to his memory she could not have been. She had not a particle of that vile sense of ownership which sometimes has defrauded us of what is rightly ours in the life-histories of public men. What she could do she did to make her husband's influence live and work. She carried out his wishes for the disposition of his library with exact fidelity, and at her death added to his splendid gift to the Boston Public Library the books which in accordance with the terms of the will had remained in her possession. She gathered up his letters from near and far, and, aware of their illegibility, had many hundreds of them handsomely copied for the use of Mr. Weiss and subsequent biographers, to whom also she courageously intrusted his journals, blotting a line sometimes, but leaving them free, almost entirely, to lay bare the secrets of a singularly impulsive heart, much given to alternations of personal feeling from the brightest to the darkest moods. Those of us who have read this journal must often have felt that we were violating penetralia from which we should have been debarred; yet, at the end, have acknowledged that but for this intimate revelation we never should have known how noble Parker was.

But Mrs. Parker was unfortunate in her choice of a literary adviser, being intent on doing everything as "Theodore" had directed, and giving final weight to a chance expression of impulsive gratitude in one of his last letters. Hence serious mismanagement of Parker's books already published and others lying in the rough and awaiting editorial supervision. In 1866 Miss Cobbe began the publication of Parker's complete works with an Introduction that is one of the most intelligent tributes ever paid to Parker's religious genius, while the editing, because of haste and the editor's remoteness from Parker's American entourage, was imperfect work. The fourteen volumes, partly because of their expensiveness, had a disappointing sale, especially in America where few of Parker's clientele were in the way of buying English books. But deeper causes were at work to prevent Parker's posthumous reputation from being what his most loyal friends would fain have had its growing bulk. The years immediately following a man's death are agreed to be those which generally determine what grip he is to have upon posterity. These years in Parker's case found the country, and especially his friends, floundering in that terrible Red Sea which is now called, in distinction from some others, the Great War. Few had done more than he to bring about that war. Few contributed so much to its moral sinews. Emerson was a first-rate recruiting officer, but Parker was not a second best. Very significant

is the story of the man who seceded from a particular congregation because his minister had exchanged with Parker. In the war time he came back because, as he explained, "When I saw the influence of his mind on our soldiers, I was forced to make a different estimate of the man." But from '61 to '65 the daily newspaper was too engrossing for men to read over again much of the literature that had inspired the struggle with its loftiest aims.

Of more importance, probably, is the fact that Parker was, as it stands written on his monument in Florence, "The Great American Preacher." So eminently were his sermons and lectures adapted for speaking that they had no corresponding value for "the harvest of a quiet eye." They were so exuberant that they were inevitably redundant. Moreover their temporal fitness was an unfailing quality which was bound to have its natural defect, except for the historian going to them for the living pulse of the not quite irrevocable past. There is also to be considered, that, soon after Parker's death, there set in the scientific tendency of thought, for some twenty years remanding the metaphysicians, the transcendentalists, to an inferior and doubtful place among the intellectual leaders of mankind. It is certain that many, to whom Parker's name would have been as a banner lifted up, but for the flood that came in with Darwin and Spencer, went after these strange gods with more confidence in their finality than has been

justified by the developments of the last twenty years.

It would be easy to exaggerate the influence of Parker on the course of thought since the tragical arrest of his activity by the fatal disease. The change has been most wonderful, but even where it has been in a direction sympathetic with his genius, not to distinguish between post and propter hoc, as quite different relations would be the extreme of foolishness. Many had entered before Parker and he entered into their labors. Many since his day have labored, and who is there so presumptuous as to dare assign to each his honorable part? The best that one can do is to inquire to what extent Parker's mind and work were prophetic of what since has transpired and more likely to endure in the several fields of his intellectual and ethical activity. Let us consider first the philosophical.

There are those who admire him heartily on other counts, who, upon this, assure us that his only laurels are those of a magnificent paragrapher of a lost cause. Assuming for the moment that the cause of intuitional metaphysics is lost, it is certain that its rise and growth in Germany, France, England, and America, was an advance of great importance on the philosophy before Kant. Its criticism on the Sensationalists was a valid, if not a final one. What Parker did was to translate the spiritual philosophy of Schelling and Jacobi and Cousin into terms of popular appre-

hension; in effect to substitute a universal inspiration for that which had been limited to the Bible and the Christian Church. In doing this, as we have seen, the doctrine took on the form and color of his personal assurance in a high degree. His philosophical "consciousness" of God and immortality and the moral law reflected the unwavering confidence of his believing soul, while at the same time his doctrine reacted on his spontaneous belief, and made it possible for him to be the preacher of a gospel which was no mere personal idiosyncrasy but the voice of human nature speaking from its utmost depths with a divine sincerity and the accent of eternal truth. What we have to consider is how far the position of Parker has been justified and how far discredited by that evolution of philosophy which we have now come to take for granted as affecting every system and preventing the finality of any, and the conclusion to which we are led is that his criticism of the Sensationalism which he found everywhere intrenched was in the rough a valid one, especially his criticism of Materialism as represented by Cabanis and Vogt and Moleschott. The collapse of such materialism, both on the side of science and on that of metaphysics, has been one of the most striking incidents of the last half century. Matter in this controversy has been the veriest Proteus, as "mind-stuff" and as "points of force" losing much of its original deformity. In the phrase of Martineau, we have had "Matter that

is up to everything, even to discovering the law of its own evolution." But, however elusive, it has failed to justify itself as the original substance of the world. Such standing has tended to the side of Mind with a resistless gravitation. Parker's contention that the world is fundamentally spiritual has been tried as by fire and proved a sound one as never in the course of philosophic thinking before now. With Naturalism in general the case has not been quite the same as with Materialism, but it is very different now from what it was halfway between this and Parker's time. Naturalism has been subjected to such criticism by the English Neo-Kantians and Hegelians, especially by Professor James Ward, in his "Naturalism and Agnosticism," that it is walking much more softly now than formerly. It looks very much as if the naturalistic philosophy was to be discredited as hasty, crude, unequal to the exigency of the facts to be accounted for. Certainly the new metaphysics is very different from Parker's, far less simple and less confident. To pass from his metaphysical thinking to that of Ward and Green and Wallace and the Cairds and Seths is like passing from a New England orchard to the wondrous interlacement of the Adirondack woods. But that Parker was the protagonist of a lost cause seems not by any means so sure to-day as sometimes heretofore. The fundamental dominance of the spiritual facts seems to be getting every day more thoroughly assured. Science has written the new

book of Exodus in a way that would have delighted Parker's soul, but that Philosophy will have to write the new book of Genesis, as he believed, grows likelier as time goes on.

Parker's philosophy, not in its particular expression, but in its essential purport, long since became the darling weapon of the orthodox in their battle with the materialistic forces of the time, but what, let us now ask, is the verdict of the dying century on his theological opinions? They have, to a very great extent, become the commonplaces of that Progressive Orthodoxy which is now inclusive of many thousands of teachers, preachers, and laymen in the orthodox churches. His main contention — that man is naturally and universally religious — finds eloquent expression in books and from pulpits innumerable where no taint of heresy is suspected by the most watchful for such miserable offense. This means that the doctrine of total depravity has had its day and ceased to be. The most favored son among the Presbyterians renders the doctrine of election as the wickedness of seeking to obtain personal, individual salvation: we must save ourselves by saving others. And in this genial construction the preacher has a host of friends. He and others in regular orthodox standing have denounced the Calvinistic God in terms that Parker's severity did not exceed. Here, where Parker has been most blamed, it should be remembered that both his love of God and his love of man necessitated his

severity. How could he love God as the Infinitely Perfect and not abhor the monstrous caricatures that were published as his likeness in the churches of his time? How could he love his fellow men so passionately and not resolve that they should share his joy in what was to him an inexpressible delight? It is said that he, in his turn, caricatured the traditional theology; and it is probable that he did, as it was preached in many churches before 1860; but not as it was preached in many and the most of them, and not as he found it in Boston's "Four-fold State" and many newer books. Upon the doctrine of eternal hell he flung himself with special violence. Now, in New England's Congregational church of highest rank that doctrine gets as little countenance as it got from Theodore Parker, and in hundreds of other churches, Congregational and Episcopal, there is a similar condition. The doctrine of the Trinity as now rendered in these churches would hardly have been recognized as such by the orthodox of Parker's time. Even his insistence on the entire humanity of Jesus is shared by many orthodox preachers, while at the same time, without logical or psychological seriousness, a unique divinity is ascribed to him. Long since the heresy of his South Boston sermon — that miracles are no longer needed to sustain the truths of Christianity — became one of the *obiter dicta* of the orthodox preacher. Since Bushnell, moreover, by a skillful use of words, Supernaturalism has obtained fresh honor in the churches where its very

life seemed threatened; but the Supernaturalism of Bushnell is hardly to be distinguished from the Spiritualism of Parker, with which his anti-supernaturalism did not conflict. Measured by the canons of Bushnell's Supernaturalism Parker would have been the greatest Supernaturalist of his time, so complete was his persuasion of the ascendency of Universal Mind and so confident his assurance of God's constant access to the human soul.

Evangelical piety has found Parker lacking in "the sense of sin," not in particular acts but in the substratum of his nature. If this was treason we must make the most of it. He had no such sense of sin. But no man was more sensitive than he to lapses from his own moral ideal, or dealt more sternly with the political and commercial and ecclesiastical sins of his generation. That his robust optimism had the defect of its quality may not be wholly denied. It took but slight account of those tragical elements which inhere so deep in life; of that "shadow of the Almighty" which has lain so heavy upon many thoughtful minds. It must further be conceded that Parker did not habitually, or frequently, penetrate to the ideal contents of those religious forms which in their obvious construction shocked his intellectual modesty and his moral sense.

I have reserved for the climax of this survey that doctrine of the Divine Immanence in Matter and in Man which was so central to Parker's theological affirmation, and had a recurrence in his

preaching not exceeded by his doctrines of the Infinitely Perfect God and the Adequacy of Man for all his Functions. His Divine Immanence in Matter was not a new discovery, but it was a forgotten truth in the New England churches. It was not quite the same as Emerson's disposition towards "seeing all things in God." In the academic nomenclature of this subject, Parker's God was more transcendent than Emerson's, less identical with the total universe. His thought was not quite that of Goethe's "Gott und Welt,"—

> God dwells within and moves the world and moulds,
> Himself and Nature in one form enfolds.

It was that of a God transcending the material universe, yet working in it organically, not mechanically from without. Forty years after Parker's death this thought has become the common property of the Unitarian and more liberal orthodox people. Many influences have contributed to this result, speculative philosophy and evolutionary science in about equal parts. Parker's influence has been quite subordinate to these, but that he apprehended this idea so clearly at a time when it had not another pulpit advocate, and published it with glowing eloquence, is surely the most significant anticipation of his prophetic soul, dreaming of things to come.

Dr. Bellows regarded Parker's Divine Immanence in Man as the most important of his contributions to Unitarian thought. He said, somewhat too sweepingly, that the Unitarians before Parker

"had not so much as heard that there was any Holy Ghost," and he interpreted Parker's Divine Immanence as a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. But it was less a revival of this doctrine than an anticipation of that doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Humanity which in our time is being ingeniously represented in progressive orthodox circles as the true meaning of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. What is certain is that the traditional doctrine had no such meaning, but it is an interesting sign of the times that men in good and regular orthodox standing are now interpreting the Divine Incarnation in the terms of Theodore Parker's Divine Immanence, which was accounted one of the most blasphemous of all his heresies some sixty years ago.

If this partial survey should be made complete, and every proper qualification should be made, the justification of Parker's daring innovations in theology by the tendencies and attainments of the present time would be a startling comment on the treatment he received and on the changes that have taken place in the religious world since he was carried from the field.[1]

[1] Among Unitarians Parker's standing has for a long time been as assured as that of Channing, though not in the same manner and degree. His portrait hangs with that of Channing and other Unitarian worthies in the Channing Hall of the American Unitarian Association. In 1885 the Association published a large selection from his sermons, introduced by Dr. Clarke, and in 1890 *Unitarianism: Its Origin and History*, which contains an admirable lecture on Parker by the Rev. Samuel B. Stewart. In the same volume Dr. J. H. Allen said that no Unitarian now thinks

Parker's critical treatment of the Bible gave very great offense, not only because of particular judgments but because of his general relegation of it to the standing of a human composition. As to the former it is the simple truth, that, from our present standpoint, he errs far less in the breadth than in the narrowness of his departure from the traditional opinions. Particular mistakes he made, no doubt. Others, as great, are being made by the best critics of the present time. The significant thing is that Parker's criticism, on the lines of De Wette, Ewald and other German masters, was entirely in the direction which the soundest Biblical criticism has taken since his day.

Most can raise the flowers now
For all have got the seed.

They grow as plentifully in the great orthodox gardens as in the little Unitarian parterre. Driver, Cheyne and others of unquestioned orthodoxy have published particular constructions of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels and Epistles that make Parker's heterodoxy seem antiquated, almost absurd, orthodoxy. At the same time there has been a brave attempt to save for the Bible the appearance of some kind of special inspiration, but "the sifted sediment of a residuum" which has thus been preserved is in no respect commensurate with the verbally infallible Bible of which Parker found his generation in consciously

of miracles as they were thought of by Parker's critics in 1841–45.

secure possession, nor can it more than temporarily delay the frank acknowledgment of the fact which Parker saw in its unqualified simplicity.

In all reformatory matters Parker was a careful student of the facts and went far to anticipate the latest sociology. When the Reform School at Westboro' was burned down he rejoiced in its destruction, saying that it was "a school of crime," and contending that the herding of bad boys together was a terrible mistake; and a similar prescience characterized his dealing with all questions affecting the condition of the dangerous and perishing classes. But all his other reformatory work is little in comparison with his contribution to the anti-slavery struggle. It was a contribution which assigns to him a place with Garrison and Lincoln and Sumner and Phillips and a few others of the greatest leaders, before the "exchange of ideas at the cannon's mouth" began. Had he done nothing else, here was a whole day's work, and the faithful servant would have earned no scant "Well done!" No other brought to the attack on slavery his knowledge of its economical bearings, but with this intellectual preparedness there went an ethical passion which no Abolitionist, not Garrison himself, could overtop. The peculiarity of his service, in good measure, was the translation of the moral fervor of the Abolitionists into the terms of anti-slavery politics. Never agreeing with Garrison and those Abolitionists who were like-minded with him in their non-voting, non-resistance meth-

ods, he was with them wholly in their conviction that slavery must and should be, not only limited, but utterly destroyed; and no other did so much to plant the seeds of this conviction in those political furrows, where they sprang up armed men from 1861 to 1865. It has been charged against him that he precipitated the contest. If he did, so much the better. "Without shedding of blood there was no remission." Parker was thoroughly convinced of this and did not fight as those who beat the air. The catastrophe was timely. It did not come too soon, nor yet too late, except that to his earthly vision was denied the sight of the great consummation. To have been a leader of the leaders in the task of liberating four million people and a great nation from the curse of slavery — that, could he have been prescient of the whole event, might have seemed to him a work with which to be well content. And it might not, for there were other bonds which, till they were riven, ate into his soul.

However disappointing Parker's lack of literary permanence may be to those who rate him high, it is not as if his mind and conscience had not been taken up into the substance of our political and religious life. So has he joined

> the choir invisible,
> Whose music is the gladness of the world.

Though others have done the good thing before me, I cannot resist the inclination to seek some final measure of his personality in the terms of that five-fold division of human nature which

served him so often and so well in his endeavors to delineate the characters of distinguished men. If he was not, like Plotinus, ashamed of his body, he had no great reason to be proud of it, breaking, as it did, about midway of what should have been his length of useful days. Nevertheless it was a body that enabled him to take much vigorous exercise and do a phenomenal amount of work. It had strong legs and arms, and when he shook hands with a friend it was with a grip that gave assurance of a man. He stood firmly planted, and his gait had the flat-footed, downright fashion of his mind. He was not built on graceful lines: something of the New England farmer survived in his form and carriage. His face was not handsome, though his friends came to think it so, with its great dome of brow, its honest blue-gray eyes, its undistinguished nose, and hard-set, fighting mouth. His appetites were healthy, his habits simple and temperate, his five senses keen upon the track of their appropriate delights.[1]

The whole man was of a piece, so that intellectually he was not so fine and delicate as he was homely and vigorous. On the æsthetic side he was but meagrely endowed, either in the way of appreciation or productive power. To the art treasures of Europe he brought only a thumb-rule measurement. He enjoyed classical music, but not so much, in all sincerity, as his favorite hymns.

[1] Of the "five wits," he had abundant "common wit," "judgment" and "memory;" less "imagination" and less "fantasy."

He tried at one time to cultivate his voice, but could only sing one note. In poetry many of the best things attracted him, but Shakespeare less than Homer and Sophocles, and Shakespeare's sonnets more than Shakespeare's plays. This in part because Shakespeare, "were he living now, would be a hunker and a snob." The defective taste of many passages in his writings is one sign of his æsthetic limitation. Yet the beauty of natural things and of human forms and faces had for him remarkable attraction, and this passed into his sermons and made many passages in them as tender as June mornings and as soft as flowers.

It is the strength of Parker's mind that impresses us as we arrive at closer comprehension of his mental operations. His acquisitions were enormous: few men in America have been so well informed. Of men whom I have known personally or in books, only Michael Heilprin has given me an equal sense of intellectual accumulation. But this had not the ordinary effect. It did not dwarf and paralyze his reasoning powers. These reacted vigorously and acutely upon his vast stores of knowledge, so that the powerful thinker is much more effectively present with us in his writings, public and private, than the man of many languages and quite boundless knowledge. That he was a great reader and student rather than a great scholar seems to be "the consensus of the competent" concerning him. One of the most tragical aspects of his life is that he turned his stores of

knowledge to so little account in the production of any learned work, with the not very important exception of his translation of De Wette's "Introduction." It has, however, been surmised by friendly critics that he had not the scholarly habit, the talent for delicately assaying evidence and skillfully coördinating it which constitutes the efficient scholar.

Somewhat more general is the agreement that Parker's intellectual ability was not that of the metaphysician, while the more hostile have represented him as being much mistaken in his conceit of philosophical knowledge. It may be that he had less aptitude for metaphysics than he imagined, its fascination for him was so great; but it should be remembered that he often used the term "philosophy" with a wide inclusion which took up science with metaphysics. He did not overrate his reasoning powers. He was not a master of metaphysical refinements, but a powerful thinker he certainly was upon inductive lines, applying his mind to great masses of facts and drawing out their significance; with great ability, moreover, in deducing from first principles their appropriate results.

The fullness of Parker's mind and the vigor of his mental operations are, however, less admirable than his moral character, as displayed in all the personal relations of his life, in his unflagging industry, in the exigent interpretation that he gave to his ministerial office, in his courageous dealing

with political iniquity, and especially in his devotion of himself with all his gifts and acquisitions to the furtherance of religious truth and social righteousness. His life was one of perfect consecration to the welfare of his fellow men. He had those "great powers" of which he was still conscious in the shadow of death, and, if he "only half used them," as he mourned, it would be interesting to know what vulgar fraction of their powers is used by the majority of men, and even by many who conceive that they have let no talent run to waste.

For Parker, as we have seen, Affection was of higher range than Intellect or Conscience, and in his personal life it had the ascendency which he assigned to it in his hierarchy of man's powers. It was because his heart was so warm and tender, that the slings and arrows of theological controversy made in his flesh such deep and lasting wounds; that he set such value on his friends and was so sensitive to their praise and blame; that the Twenty-Eighth was to him "a thing ensky'd;" that, because he had no children, he went mourning all his days and was always gathering those of his universal and particular adoption to his heart. It was because he was such a lover of mankind that he could not endure to see it so defrauded of what was to him his utmost joy — an absolute confidence in the perfect wisdom and the perfect love of God. His detestation of the traditional theology was but the harsh expression of his passionate

jealousy for the divine perfection and of his passionate regret that men should fail to enter into an inheritance prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

At the top of Parker's hierarchy of man's powers was the religious faculty, the soul. It is not necessary for us to construe this as he did in order to appreciate his realization of its theoretical significance for him in his personal experience. In what he thought a separate faculty many have found the high consent of intellect, affection, conscience, confronted by the Mystery of mysteries. But, whatever the true rendering of the facts, nothing else touching the life of Parker is so sure as that his religiousness, his sense of the eternal and divine, of God, was the central fact of his experience. Always in setting forth his religious system, he wrote large at the top, THE INFINITE PERFECTION OF GOD. He never tired of reiterating this doctrine and of drawing out from it a doctrine of the perfect world, a perfect providence, a perfect opportunity and future for humanity. He often tried to show how wonderfully man's central piety, the love of God, irradiated and enforced all other pieties of mind and heart and will. But all of these endeavors to give intellectual expression to his religious feeling fall far below its actual height. I cannot conceive of a man more enamored than he was of the Divine Perfection and living more habitually in his consciousness of it, and in the peace and comfort

which such consciousness assures to those with whom it dwells. Whatever else he was, he was, first, last, and always, a believing and rejoicing soul.

This in his private meditation and his public speech, — his swiftest words still loitering behind his climbing thought. A parallel impression is that of the marvelous abundance of his life, its industry, its resource, the overflowing bounty of its uses and affections and good will to men. A final impression and, perhaps, the most significant of the special part that he was called to play upon a memorable scene, is that of his affirmative aspect. Seen at this remove, his denials in comparison with his affirmations are an inappreciable amount. Nor can it be regarded as a distinction of small moment that, of all men in his time, or in his century, he was the most frank and fearless prophet of Christianity as the world's greatest natural religion, and of Religion as the most characteristic aspect of our human life. We get the right measure of his importance when we recognize the transition to these points of view as fundamental to the religious evolution of the present time and his part in it as second to no other.

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The Riverside Press
*Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.*
*Cambridge, Mass, U. S. A.*

Y0-BWC-228